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CAREER AND  
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SIR WILLIAM WHITE







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SIR WILLIAM WHITE







*W A White*





*H. W. White*

# SIR WILLIAM WHITE

K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

FOR SIX YEARS AMBASSADOR  
AT CONSTANTINOPLE

HIS LIFE AND  
CORRESPONDENCE

By H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS

AUTHOR OF  
"THE GERMANS IN FRANCE"  
"THE RUSSIANS AT HOME"  
"THE POLISH CAPTIVITY"  
ETC., ETC.



... ..

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# SIR WILLIAM WHITE

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## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL VIEW

GOETHE, in two perfect little poems, presented together under the title of *Orpheisch*, sets forth in the first that, let a man struggle as he may, his fate is irrevocably fixed in the stars; and in the second, that a lamp may be perfectly trimmed and full of oil, but that unless it somehow gets touched with fire, it can never burn. Sir William White's destiny had been marked out beforehand by his strong personal character. He has himself, however, been heard to say, that unless he had been appointed to Bucharest, at the critical moment when Roumania was about to be raised from vassalage to independence, he could never have passed from the Consular into the Diplomatic Service, and thus would never have been eligible for the post of Ambassador.

As it was, the Belgrade Consul-General of 1876, the Dantzic Consul of 1861, the Warsaw Vice-Consul (or Consular Clerk) of 1857, became actually in 1885, officially in 1886, the Ambassador of England at Constantinople, where for six years, until his death in 1891, he made his power and his influence more

seriously felt than any previous Ambassador had done since the days of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.

Sir William White was born on February 13, 1824, at Pulawy, in Poland. He lived in that country, at one time and another, for more than thirty years, and spoke the Polish language perfectly; from which, and from the fact that his mother and his maternal grandmother held land in Poland, it was inferred that he must, at least on the mother's side, be of Polish origin. He had, however, not one drop of Polish blood in his veins.

Sir William White's father was in the Consular and afterwards in the Colonial Service, and he was at the time of his death Governor of Trinidad.

"When I knew him, between 1845 and 1851," writes Mr. Cadman Jones, one of Sir William White's oldest and most intimate friends, "he was stationed at Trinidad. What I chiefly remember about him is, that his son was his exact image."

His family, settled for several generations in the Isle of Man, was of Dutch extraction, and its original name was "de Witt."

Sir William's mother was the daughter of General William Neville Gardiner, last English Envoy to the Court of Poland in the days of King Stanislas Augustus, under whom was accomplished, in the words of the usually calm Guizot,<sup>1</sup> "the murder of an entire nation."

General William Neville Gardiner—usually called "Neville-Gardiner," which the Poles shortened into "Neville" alone—was, according to the Foreign Office Records, Minister at Warsaw in 1784, twelve years after the first Partition, and again in 1794, one year after the second Partition and one year before the third Partition,

<sup>1</sup> Guizot's *Memoirs*, year 1830.

by which the formidable insurrection of Kosciusko was immediately followed. Then the capital of Poland passed beneath the domination of Prussia, and Warsaw became a Prussian provincial town. A leading member of General Neville Gardiner's mission was Colonel William Gardiner, apparently a relative; and the chief had with him a certain number of so-called "correspondents," who in the present day would be described as secretaries, or *attachés*. With the complete destruction of Poland by the third Partition, the mission at Warsaw came to an end. There was no longer a Polish Government or a Polish Court to be accredited to.

General Neville Gardiner now returned to his military duties. He was appointed commander-in-chief of the troops in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and died at his post in 1806, the year in which Napoleon re-constituted the Prussian provinces of Poland into the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw.

General Neville Gardiner was brother of Viscount Mountjoy and uncle of the Viscount Mountjoy who in 1816 was created Earl of Blessington.

Mrs. Neville continued to live at her country place in Poland, and it was in Poland that her daughter became acquainted with Sir William White's father. Of two children by the marriage, one died in childhood; the other was William Arthur White, the future ambassador. After going to school for some years at King William's College in the Isle of Man, young White was sent to Cambridge and entered at Trinity College, where he remained two years.

On leaving the University in the year 1843, he went to stay with his mother and grandmother in Poland, a Cambridge friend, Mr. Cadman Jones, accompanying him and remaining with the family some three months.



"His mother and grandmother," writes Mr. Jones, "lived at Gora Pulawska, on the left bank of the Vistula, where the high road from Radom to Lublin crosses the river, and directly opposite Pulawy, formerly the palace of the Czartoryskis, which is on the right bank. There is a legend that Charles XII. of Sweden bombarded it from the spot on which the house of Gora now stands. This is on a slightly rising ground, where the last ripple of the Carpathians sinks into the sandy plain of the north-east of Europe. He went out uncertain whether he should return to England or not."

Nearly six years after his arrival in Poland from Cambridge—in the spring of 1849—Mr. White suffered a severe loss in the death of his grandmother and mother.

"The mourning seal, edge, and envelope will at once make you guess," he writes to Mr. Cadman Jones, "that this is a message of some great misfortune for me—which, I am convinced, will be duly felt by you. You have not heard from me this long time; and my answer to your last kind letter is the sad tidings that I am left an orphan, completely alone so far as kindred goes in this country.

"Yes, my dear friend, both my grandmother and dear excellent mother have left me for another, and, I hope and trust in Christ, for a better world. You who have seen that circle as one of the family, who have known the amiability and sensibility of the mother, the loving devotedness of the daughter, you can best appreciate my painful position and my affliction.

"I cannot easily account for my long silence towards you. Laziness had something to do with it; but I have for some time had considerable anxiety of mind owing to repeated disappointments in more or less serious matters.

"On the 9th October, myself and my dear mother, we undertook a trip to Paris for the purpose of meeting my father; and we returned to Zielonka on the 3rd November, our movements being so rapid that I did not find time to drop you a line.

"My excellent mother had been labouring under a painful illness for some years. She enjoyed very much

our excursion ; but, alas ! her mind had been preyed upon by very great anxiety.

"At the time I engaged in affairs (of a pecuniary nature) in this country with the view to increasing my income we entertained too sanguine hopes of receiving remittances in which we were completely disappointed. This led to difficulties. Bad seasons and casual losses rendered many plans abortive ; and my want of experience has added not a little to this unpleasant position.

"All this preyed upon my mother's mind. Her heart so sensitive, her feelings for me always so full of anxiety, suffered very much—too much, alas ! She enjoyed exceedingly her visit to Paris ; but upon our return we found my grandmother getting daily weaker and more infirm. My father joined us most fortunately in January last and has been constantly present. He leaves only to-day to resume his public duties. My grandmother declining gradually expired in the night of the 11th to the 12th of March, 1849.

"My dear mother had sufficient strength left to attend the funeral, and was pretty well for five weeks afterwards when she got a cough, and, her lungs being very much affected, she prepared for that terrible separation which was to leave me an orphan and alone in this country, and which took place on the 11th May, exactly two months after her mother.

"Many, many witnesses—hundreds, rich and poor—witnesses, I say, of her virtuous life—attended her to the grave. In fact, she is universally and sincerely regretted.

"Under these afflicting circumstances I received your letter, and it is impossible for me to tell you anything further about myself. You will guess my melancholy feelings and meditations.

"Many of those you knew are dead, and many changes have to be noticed in my next, when I shall try to send you a flower from the grave of your two sincere friends of Gora, whom I am sure you will lament sincerely.

"Pray try to assist my father in removing my books and things from Miss Garner's, 6, Green Street, Cambridge, to London, and thence here, *via* Dantzic.

"I still live in hopes of seeing you some day ; but, believe me, my life is very sad indeed.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"W. A. WHITE."

"I heard from him," writes Mr. Cadman Jones, "at irregular intervals all through the remainder of his life. When I left Poland, his employment was looking after the estate; to which, while I was there, he gave a good deal of personal supervision. I have a vague impression that owing to the distress occasioned by the Crimean War, things turned out ill, and that the properties were sold."

English residents in Russia who wished to do so remained there throughout the war, and, as a rule, were treated with great consideration. It was thought strange, however, and suspicious that an Englishman should stay during hostilities with his own country in a part of the Empire so notoriously disaffected as Poland; and, as a precautionary measure, a gendarme was attached to Mr. White, who was kept under supervision except on comparatively rare occasions when he furnished his too assiduous guardian with enough money to enable him to get drunk. I am indebted for this interesting information to Field-Marshal Sir John Lintorn Simmons, who succeeded General Mansfield in 1857 at the Warsaw Consulate.

From his twentieth, then, up to his thirty-fourth year, Mr. White was occupied not with Diplomatic or Consular work, but solely with agriculture. But for some representations which he had to make to the Russian authorities in the character of British subject he might never have had occasion to visit the British Consulate at Warsaw, and never, therefore, in all probability, would have been invited by its chief to take service in it. To secure the assistance of an English gentleman who possessed a perfect knowledge of Polish affairs and of the Polish language was an evident advantage for General Mansfield, the newly appointed Consul-General, who, arriving at Warsaw soon after the peace which followed the Crimean War, saw Poland for the first time.

Mr. White's entry into the Warsaw Consulate cannot, however, be looked upon as a step taken without aim or without previous leanings towards the kind of employment he was now obtaining. To begin a consular and quasi-diplomatic career at the age of thirty-three was not for an ambitious man a promising start. It had been Mr. White's desire, at an early age, and the desire of his father (who himself began life in the Consular Service), his mother, and his grandmother (Mrs. Neville) that he should adopt diplomacy as his profession; though at the time of his leaving Cambridge the pecuniary position of his family rendered it impossible for them to make him the necessary allowance. After referring to this unrealisable project, Mr. White, in one of his letters from Bucharest (April, 1885), writes as follows:

"But my time was not lost during my long residence in Poland, as I acquired a knowledge of Russian ways and doings which has proved invaluable to me, and would prove still more so were I serving under a chief more distrustful of the 'Moskal'<sup>1</sup> than our 'G.O.M.'"

The Consulate at Warsaw was not much of a commercial post, but mainly a political one. The English, French, Prussian, and Austrian Consulates-General at Warsaw were first established, at the suggestion of the Emperor Nicholas, after 1830, in testimony of his intention to maintain Poland as a separate kingdom with its own institutions; and England has always been represented at Warsaw by some military man—usually, a Colonel of Artillery or Engineers. The Consul-General at Warsaw transacted business in Mr. White's day

<sup>1</sup> Polish for "Muscovite." Long after "Muscovy" had become "Russia" for the rest of Europe it was still "Muscovy" for the Poles. The French in like manner continued to call Prussia "Brandenburgh" long after it had ceased to be "Brandenburgh" for all other nations.

with the Director of Foreign Affairs for the Kingdom of Poland ; and he addressed his reports sometimes to the Foreign Secretary in London, sometimes to the Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

During the Crimean War, General Mansfield had held the post of military adviser to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and he came to Warsaw direct from the famous capital to which Sir William White, nearly thirty years later, was to make his way. After helping General Mansfield for a short time in the Consulate, and inspiring him with feelings of confidence and friendship, Mr. White soon agreed to accept a permanent engagement on the understanding that promotion was to be open to him in the Consular Service.

He had some business to attend to in England, and in March, 1857, received in London, from General Mansfield at Warsaw, the following letter :

*“ March 9, 1857.*

“ MY DEAR WHITE,

“ I am happy to be able to tell you that I have received Lord Clarendon's approval of the arrangement I proposed in your favour, and that I am authorised to draw £25 per quarter on your account, the arrangement to take effect from the 1st of next month. This gives you, therefore, till the end of March to arrange your affairs, which, I hope, will be sufficient for you. You will have watched the late Parliamentary contest with the same interest as I have ; indeed, the attention of Europe has been altogether absorbed by it.

“ If you require more time to enable you to carry out your move and change of home, do not fail to apprise me, as you must not be a pecuniary loser in consequence of entering your new career.

“ Yours very truly,

“ H. B. MANSFIELD.”

Mr. White's duties at the Warsaw Consulate soon became important, for General Mansfield was called away

from his post before he had occupied it many months in order to go to India, where the Mutiny had broken out, and where he had been appointed chief of Sir Colin Campbell's staff. Mr. White now for a time became acting Consul-General, but without any permanent change in his rank.

A great diplomatist, Sir William resembled in no way the conventional diplomatist of fiction, and too often of real life; who, suave in manner, impenetrable in look, abstains on principle from any show of zeal, believes, really, that language was given to him to conceal his thoughts, and, hearing of another diplomatist's death, indulges in subtle speculations as to what object he could have had in dying. Sir William White was a diplomatist of the robust school. Tall, handsome, and of commanding presence, his demeanour was comparatively rough. Without being careless, he was not over careful in his dress. In conversation he was frank, genial, always in high spirits, with a powerful voice, which often broke into loud laughter. Among well-known types the one his personal appearance most strongly suggested was that of an English country gentleman who happened to wear a beard.

But his manner of speech pointed in a different direction. Accustomed to many tongues, and as dexterous in carrying on a conversation with different people in different languages as a juggler in keeping up balls in the air, he spoke English with a scarcely perceptible foreign accent, which was neither French, German, nor Polish, but perhaps a faint reminiscence of all three, with something indefinable and beyond analysis superadded.

That everything about him was natural—so natural as sometimes to be deceptive—is shown by the fact, that, occupying a subordinate position at the Warsaw

Consulate, he presented the same characteristics which struck every one when, thirty years afterwards, he directed the Embassy at Constantinople.

Sir William White began life in the days of "disabilities," when Jews were not allowed to sit in Parliament, nor Roman Catholics and Dissenters to graduate at the ancient Universities. Had he completed his course at Cambridge, he would have been unable by reason of his religion to take a degree; for he had been brought up in the faith of his grandmother and mother. The honorary LL.D. was ultimately conferred upon him, but not until after he had been named Ambassador *ad interim* at Constantinople; and he was the first Roman Catholic Ambassador appointed since the Reformation.

"Herr Doctor! Ich gratulire," wrote Lord Arthur Russell to him on the occasion of his receiving the Cambridge degree. "The honours conferred by an ancient and free corporation on a fellow citizen are more valuable than the stars given by Ministers. It is one of the illusions I still have left, that it really is a fine thing to be made a D.C.L. by our venerable Universities. I am sorry that I did not, like Lord Acton, have the pleasure of seeing you in your cardinal's robes."

The nomination to Constantinople by which the conferring of the honorary degree had been preceded, was only provisional until the arrival of Sir Edward Thornton, the titular Ambassador; and Sir William White was assured at this time, by powerful and influential friends, by Ambassadors and Ministers of State, that he had not the slightest chance of obtaining the appointment permanently.

He was much pressed, moreover, in that very year of 1885, officially by Lord Salisbury, and privately by one of his most intimate and most trusted friends, Sir

Robert Morier, to accept the Legation at Peking; and but for his strong character ("character," as a German philosopher has defined it, is "the resistance offered to pressure from without") he must at that critical moment have lost all chance of going permanently to Constantinople. With noteworthy foresight, both Lord Salisbury and Sir Robert Morier perceived sixteen years ago the supreme importance that China was gradually assuming in the affairs of the world.

"I have been considering very carefully with Sir Philip Currie," wrote Lord Salisbury, September 30, 1885, "the possibility you expressed to me some weeks ago. I am very anxious to recognise your undoubted claims, and to make use of your great experience and ability in a suitable employment. But I am forced to remember what Gortchakoff said, when they asked him why he did not promote his son: 'Can I poison the Ambassadors?' The vacancies are very few—only two. Brazil I know you have already declined, and I cannot manage by any shuffling of the cards to vacate any post which you would be disposed to take. Brazil is naturally not popular. The alternative before you, I am afraid, therefore, is either Peking, or to wait till something more favourable presents itself. Of course, it is a matter of uncertainty whether I shall have any influence over the use to be made of that opportunity when it occurs. You told me that you would not take Peking, and I hardly like to dwell on it. But I cannot help reminding you of the extreme importance which that mission is assuring. The Power that can establish the best footing in China will have the best part of the trade of the world; I cannot help saying, that the matter should not be put aside without reflection."

Twelve days earlier, Sir Robert Morier had addressed to Sir William, from Frankfort, a most friendly letter, of which the verve would be lost and the "free fantasia" style destroyed if one word were altered or suppressed.



"My dear White," wrote this eminent diplomatist who had recently been appointed to the Embassy at St. Petersburg, "I am just an infernal correspondent, and it's no use trying to disguise it. I have two letters of yours on my soul, and damned bad company they are for it, for whenever I have thought of them I have had a fresh outburst of irritation against myself. The first undoubtedly required an answer—even if only to say that I could say nothing. But my reason for writing to-day is a very different one. It is to urge you in the strongest way I can to accept the post of China, if offered, as I feel sure it would be, if it was thought you would accept it. Now listen attentively to what I say. My sole and only motive in going out of my way to express this opinion is my earnest desire for your personal welfare. For myself personally, the loss of you at Bucharest, and of my chance of a visit from you at St. Petersburg, with the prospect of being coached up in all matters connected with the Slav *Kosmos* would be a colossal calamity; but I am bound as an old and *most sincere* friend to tell you what I deem best for you.

"I know better than any one that the post you ought to fill is Constantinople. I know that you had not ill-grounded hope that you might get it, and if I saw any chance of your doing so, I would say, 'Bide your time at Bucharest.' But I have good grounds for believing that, notwithstanding the extraordinary fact that with your powers and your fearless individuality, you have completely succeeded in gaining the confidence of the F.O. and of both the Montagues and the Capulets who alternatively reign there, you have *no* prospect of getting the post, within measurable time, at least. I have independent grounds for believing this. Both as regards yourself and the good of the country, I do not think that time should be lost in giving you your chance *einzugreifen in die Weltgeschichte*. Now there is *no* European post in which I can foresee any possibility for you to get this chance for the present. On the other hand, in my humble opinion, the political complications of the planet being such as they are, China, St. Petersburg, and Constantinople are, *as regards us*, three points of the greatest importance. As I told Giers, we must avoid war, because if war there is, it will be a *planetary war*, with the sun and moon and Saturn and Mars and Venus all looking on. All the

forces of Asia and Europe will have to be stirred. Now I believe China is just getting within touch of planetary influence. We ought to secure China. Now there are only two kinds of Ministers possible there—a Chinese expert, like Wade, or a colossal European statesman. The expert, now Hart has resigned, does not, I believe, exist, and if he did, would, *me judice*, have to be entirely discarded. What we want is the man who can seize the great political bearings of the question, and who has the vigour to carry out the idea, the *savoir-faire* to get behind Chinese officialism. *You* are the man; no man in the service or out of it has the same grasp of this same *savoir-faire*. It would be madness to accept Rio or any other similar post; but China, I believe, would give you your chance, and if it did, you would use it, and then Constantinople or the Nile would be your due.

"I speak with the full conviction that I am giving you the right counsel. If you do not take it and remain at Bucharest, I shall be the gainer. The few of your friends I have seen since Hart's resignation all echo my sentiments.

"I have had three such delightful days with the King and Queen of Roumania at Königstein. It was a pleasure to me to hear them talk the way they did about you. I felt rather a traitor, for they supplicated me to use all my influence that you should not be promoted away from Bucharest. I have solemnly promised to pay them a visit next year.

"God bless you! Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest my advice, knowing I shall be personally happy if you don't take it. But if you do, telegraph, 'Think you are right,' and I will then work in that sense.

"Yours ever,

"R. B. MORIER."

Sir William did not telegraph "Think you are right." He was convinced, indeed, that his friend was wrong; and, as a matter of fact, he was, twelve months later, appointed Ambassador at Constantinople.

Sir William during the most important part of his career, extending over the last fifteen years of his life, seems to have enjoyed in an equal degree the good will

of both parties. Lord Derby gave him the C.B., Lord Granville the K.C.M.G., and Lord Salisbury the G.C.M.G. It was Lord Derby who sent him to the Conference of Constantinople as *adlatus* to Lord Salisbury; while to Lord Salisbury he was indebted for his nomination to Bucharest, and for his promotion at Bucharest from the rank of Diplomatic Agent and Consul-General to that of Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. Mr. Gladstone's Government sent him to Constantinople as Ambassador *ad interim* in 1885; and the Government of Lord Salisbury appointed him permanent Ambassador in 1886.

Amongst Sir William White's letters are to be found copies of two congratulatory ones addressed to him by an eminent leader of Whigs, Earl Russell, and by an eminent leader of Radicals, Mr. Gladstone. Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, in a very interesting article on his life and work (contributed to the *Speaker*), regards him as a Home Ruler. But in one of his despatches from Bucharest in reference to the admission of Jews to the Roumanian Parliament Sir William sets forth, that, according to the Roumanian view, the Jews would form a separate party to impede legislation, "like the Home Rule faction in the House of Commons."

He was never, in fact, a man whom either Liberals or Conservatives could claim as their own; and he must often have regretted, like most of his diplomatic associates, that it was sometimes found necessary to shape the foreign policy of England so as to suit, not the interests of the country, but those of a Parliamentary party, or of popular opinion outside Parliament.

In regard to many important questions that came beneath the notice and study of Sir William, there was an absolute *consensus* of opinion among well-informed

diplomatists, whereas in Parliament two diametrically opposite views were held by Conservatives and by Liberals. Lord Napier at St. Petersburg, Lord Augustus Loftus at Berlin, Colonel Stanton and Mr. White at Warsaw, all understood the Polish insurrection of 1863. But Lord Russell did not seem to understand it in the least; and, having a fixed part to play in Parliament, could scarcely have wished to understand it. As a rule, the Liberals supported it, while the Conservatives deplored it.

During the period of the Bulgarian Massacres, Liberals might have been met with in England who denied that they had been provoked, and Conservatives who declared that they never took place.

A true diplomatist, Sir William belonged to neither of the two great political parties. He carried out his instructions faithfully, vigorously, and with success, and he sent home the fullest and fairest reports. He felt much his permanent separation from England, and constantly refers to it in his letters. What does the author of *Coningsby* say on this subject? "A diplomatist is, after all, an abstraction. There is a want of nationality about his being. I always look upon diplomatists as the Hebrews of politics, without country, political creed, popular convictions, that strong reality of existence which pervades the career of an eminent citizen in a free and great country."

To speak of his habits, so far as they were connected with his work, Sir William was an early riser, and had read all the papers and heard all the local news of the previous night before other diplomatists were out of bed. He also attended late receptions and balls; and, that he might reach them wakeful and alert, would go to bed at eight and get up at midnight. He was wonderfully

punctual and never failed to keep an appointment. One afternoon at Warsaw, when the Town Hall was blazing and troops of all arms were drawn up in front of the conflagration, which was looked upon as a final revolutionary flare-up in view of massacres and a European intervention, he was asked whether he intended to keep a dinner engagement for which the hour was approaching and which, under the circumstances, might well have been put off.

"Whatever happens," he said, "the dinner will be ready at seven o'clock, and it is best to be punctual."

But the line—the circular hedge—of troops was too thick, and but for the politeness of a Cossack colonel, who recognised Mr. White, and told an orderly to pass him through, he never could have got to his entertainment.

In Poland, when the popular manifestations which culminated in the insurrection had once begun, Mr. White found abundant employment for his inexhaustible activity. Afterwards at Dantzic, where as Consul he had nothing in the way of politics to occupy him, he was not only allowed, but encouraged to give his attention to affairs outside his own particular domain; and, during his ten years' residence in the city at the mouth of the Vistula, the Foreign Office received from him reports not only on German commerce, but also, and, above all, on such subjects as religious movements in Austria and Slavonic aspirations in Hungary. Panslavism in general, moreover, was treated in one of these special reports, which never found their way into blue books, and in all probability were never seen except by the Foreign Secretary, the political and permanent under-secretaries, and, in some cases, the Prime Minister.

Throughout his career, until he had reached a point beyond which it was impossible to rise, Sir William White

was constantly being called upon to perform duties superior to those of the post he officially held. It has been seen that at Warsaw he had been Consular Clerk for only four months when, on the sudden departure of his chief, General Mansfield, for India, he became for a time acting Consul-General. Seven years later, after being named Consul at Dantzic, he was asked not to take up his new appointment until he could be spared from Warsaw, where he was once more performing the duties of Consul-General. From Dantzic, moreover, he was sent on a political mission to Hungary, which with other lands in Eastern Europe formed the subject of a private report to the Foreign Office.

He had not long held the post of Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent at Belgrade when he was appointed *adlatus* to Lord Salisbury at the Constantinople Conference, where for the first time the interests and needs of the Christian subjects of the Porte were seriously considered.

The Conference of Constantinople marked an important point in Sir William White's career, and soon after its conclusion he was transferred from Belgrade to Bucharest, where, while fulfilling what might well have been disagreeable duties, he inspired both King and Queen with the most friendly feelings ; indeed, with genuine regard. The independence of Roumania had already been recognised both by victorious Russia and by vanquished Turkey. Russia, it is true, stipulated for the execution of one unacceptable condition, to which, sooner or later, Roumania was sure from necessity to agree. But the other Powers demanded, in addition to the cession of territory which Russia insisted upon, that the Jewish inhabitants of Roumanian birth, but unacquainted for the most part with the Roumanian language, together

with foreign Jews, and even Jewish wanderers on Roumanian soil, should have granted to them equal political rights with the ancient population of pure Roumanian blood.

They required, moreover, before Roumanian Independence could be recognised, that the Roumanians should give way to Germany, or, rather, to Prince Bismarck, in regard to what, in a very high quarter, was correctly described as a "railway job."

Sir Henry Elliot, writing from Vienna to Mr. White at Bucharest, expressed his regret that the recognition of Roumanian Independence should be made dependent on so petty a matter, about which not one word was said in the treaty of Berlin. Nor could Lord Salisbury approve in the abstract of such a condition being insisted upon. But he explained to Mr. White that Prince Bismarck had given England such valuable support at the Berlin Conference on points of the first importance, that it was impossible not to do something for him in return. He was sorry to place Mr. White in an awkward position. But diplomacy was like chess: a piece had now and then to be sacrificed; and the piece on this occasion was the new Envoy.

The Jewish question was full of difficulties, and the Roumanians were for the most part full of prejudices in regard to them, though Sir William White pointed out in more than one despatch that the political disabilities weighing upon some three hundred thousand Jews, of whom about three-quarters had nothing—not even language—in common with the Roumanians, were in practice equally felt (if felt they were) by all foreigners in Roumania.

There was much persecution, however, going on at the time. Turks persecuted Christians, Christians

persecuted Jews, while eminent Jews in foreign parts persecuted Ministers of State, and through them the Christian princes of the East. If, for example, the Prince of Roumania travelled westward on a visit of pleasure, the well-organised Alliance Israélite watched his progress and requested the Foreign Minister of whatever country he happened to be staying in to call his attention to the fact that the Jews living beneath his rule did not possess equal political rights with the rest of his subjects. Lord Derby was once invited to worry Prince Charles of Roumania—in England at the time—on a point of this kind. But his Lordship made some excuse for not troubling the Queen's guest about a matter which, apart from other considerations, was quite beyond the Prince's own personal control.

Besides holding out against the Roumanians on the subject of the three hundred thousand Jews of all kinds to whom they refused unconditional enfranchisement; of the territory demanded by Russia, which they were determined not to cede, and of the Bismarck "railway job" to which they persisted in objecting, Mr. White had to get from the Roumanian Government a favourable commercial treaty, and he had to do all this without occupying any recognised diplomatic position.

The undefined character of Mr. White's status must, in spite of his personal popularity, have been a source of considerable annoyance to the Roumanian Government; for when, in 1879, Bratiano made his circular visit to the principal European capitals, in order to protest against the forced cession of Bessarabia to Russia, one of the first requests made by the Roumanian Minister to the English Government was that they should appoint to Bucharest an Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. Mr. White (whom Bratiano had doubtless



in view at the time) had already his credentials as Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary locked up in his desk. But some months had still to pass before he could show them; and when he presented them to King Charles, he, at the same time on the part of England, recognised his Majesty as Sovereign of Roumania.

After the recognition of Roumanian Independence, and the signing of the commercial treaty (the two things went together), one of the first important duties required of the English Minister at Bucharest was a very important one indeed. He had to take charge temporarily of the Constantinople Embassy; and, Eastern Roumelia having now been brought into union with Bulgaria, he was instructed to support the national aspirations and claims of the new State.

From the time of Mr. White's first appearance at Constantinople as Ambassador *ad interim*, his chief activity was shown in backing up Bulgaria against the pressure brought to bear upon her for a time by Russia, when the Bulgarians (like all Christian subjects of the Porte in every similar case) showed themselves perfectly well disposed towards the Power most ready to assist them. Sir William White's attitude in connection with Bulgaria was much approved by his brilliant and sagacious friend, Sir Robert Morier, except that Sir Robert wished to see England befriending Bulgaria, not in opposition to Russia, but in harmony and co-operation with her. Surely, however, this depended a good deal on Russia's own bearing towards the newly created State?

On one point the two friends were quite agreed—that England ought to make herself (to use Morier's own words) "*the point d'appui*" of the Christians in the Balkan Peninsula.

Once in occupation of the Embassy Palace in the

Turkish capital, it suited Sir William White so well that he felt it to be his destiny—it was at all events his determination—to make it his permanent home. Before he was appointed definitely to the first of diplomatic posts (a post where, for various reasons, the Ambassador has much more liberty of action than at others of equal rank), Buenos Ayres had been offered to him, and Rio de Janeiro pressed upon him; and we have seen that he was almost entreated to go to Peking. But he had set his heart upon Constantinople, and there he ultimately settled down.

From the days of the Conference, in 1876, to his own provisional appointment, in 1885, the Constantinople Embassy had been in the hands of Sir Henry Elliot, Sir Henry Layard, Mr. Goschen, Sir Drummond Wolff, Lord Dufferin, and Sir Edward Thornton—who, however, was only a titular occupant; six Ambassadors in nine years! At the time of his lamented death in December, 1891—a substantial loss to his country, a sorrowful one to his friends—Sir William White had already performed the duties of Ambassador for six years consecutively.

Throughout this period, he showed himself not only a skilful diplomatist, but a powerful one; caring little for petty personal triumphs, but generally managing in important matters to get his own way. In asserting himself, he seems at times to have been abrupt and even violent. "We shall do nothing so long as that bear remains at the English Embassy!" exclaimed one of his diplomatic rivals, not to say enemies. He once, too, received from the Foreign Office a letter in which the following passage occurs: "I know what good work you are doing, by the bitter things that are said against you."

A strong, bearlike man would doubtless, in spite of

disadvantages of style, obtain more success in diplomacy than a weak one with charming manners. But in Sir William White the kindest nature and abundant strength were combined. He was of a most obliging disposition, and though constantly occupied with important affairs, was always ready to furnish an inquiring friend with whatever information he might need, on subjects of which Sir William possessed full and often exclusive knowledge.

He had wide sympathies, too, and always during the eight years he passed at Warsaw, subscribed, Roman Catholic as he was, towards the maintenance of the English church; saying (so Sir Lintorn Simmons, Mr. White's chief at the time, informs me) that "the English ought to have their place of worship."

Very successful in diplomacy, Sir William White was skilful also in the difficult art of life. What prospect had he of a career when he entered the Warsaw Consulate at the age of thirty-three as clerk? Ambitious, however, and full of assiduity, he concentrated all his energies on the best means of obtaining promotion along the path on which he had set his heart. Suddenly called upon to assume the duties of acting Consul-General, when his official position was only that of clerk, he was at once brought into direct relations with Lord Clarendon, Foreign Secretary at the time. But he knew no other political personage of the first importance until he was introduced, after he had passed four years at Warsaw, to Lord Lansdowne, who, at his request, gave him a letter to Lord John Russell, with whom, two years later, the Insurrection of 1863 placed him in constant communication.

The rules and traditions of the Foreign Office are generally supposed to be of so rigid a character that any attempt to break through them would only bring the transgressor to confusion. Yet, such was the trust placed

in the wideness and accuracy of Sir William White's information, that in whatever country he might be placed—Poland, Prussia, Servia, Roumania—his chiefs seem always to have assumed (and with reason) that he was perfectly acquainted with the affairs of all neighbouring and all kindred lands. Even when he had reached Bucharest, where he had at least four very important questions to occupy him in connection with the recognition of Roumanian Independence, he was told on the highest authority, that if he could only throw any light on "the mysterious politics of the Austrian Court," the Foreign Office would be very much obliged to him.

On his retirement, Sir William White meant to devote himself to literary work, with a view not to the Foreign Office Archives, where so many of his reports lie buried, but to publication.

One of his chosen subjects, which he certainly would have handled in masterly fashion, was the Partition of Poland; and he had already begun to collect materials for his memoirs. These, including much valuable correspondence, have been kindly placed by Lady White at the disposal of the present writer.

## CHAPTER II

### VICE-CONSUL WHITE AT WARSAW

**D**URING the first three or four years that followed Mr. White's appointment "order" did indeed "reign at Warsaw"; and not by any means in the peace-with-solitude sense in which the words were employed on the too famous occasion when Marshal Sebastiani uttered them in the French Chamber.

Russia had been much shaken, much weakened by the war carried on against her by England, France, Turkey, Sardinia, and—one might almost add—Austria; and she was sincerely occupied with internal reforms of the most important kind. She had disengaged herself from all foreign questions—as Russia can so well afford to do whenever she thinks fit. The defeat of Austria in 1859, by France and Sardinia, did not seem in any way to affect her; though it certainly caused her no grief. Her army was being gradually allowed to decrease; a matter of no political importance, for there was no quarter from which she had the slightest reason to fear attack. Since the Crimean War she had given up recruitment in Poland, as in the Russian Empire generally; and without thinking it worth while to notify foreign Powers on the subject, had practically disarmed.

It had been determined to emancipate the serfs, to reform the administration, and to introduce into civil and criminal proceedings publicity, oral evidence, the

jury system and the employment of counsel ; all of which was faithfully done.

The censorship, too, over newspapers, without being abolished or seriously modified by law, was being exercised in the most moderate manner and, in some cases, scarcely exercised at all.

In the kingdom of Poland, under the mild rule of Prince Gortchakoff (Prince Michael of Crimean fame), things went smoothly enough. The only reform introduced was the substitution of the French system of conscription by ballot for the arbitrary system of proscriptio by designation, previously in force. This, however, was an important change, and Prince Gortchakoff's general attitude showed him to be animated by the new Emperor's benevolent intentions. The *laissez aller* of the new reign was quite as noticeable in Poland as in Russia proper. The Russian garrison in Warsaw had become very small. The Polish language was spoken everywhere, including the public offices, where by law Russian should have been used. Though not politically free, the Poles led free lives. They were in no way harassed.

By an act of amnesty, published just after the Coronation, numbers of Poles had been recalled from Siberia ; who, on their return, failed to show any good will towards the Government which had sent them out. It was really, however, the Emperor Nicholas who had exiled them ; Alexander II. had only brought them back.

During the first half-dozen years of Alexander II.'s beneficent reign, no one, either in Poland or in Russia, was punished or even brought to trial for any political offence.

It was under these peaceful conditions that Mr. White began his duties at the Warsaw Consulate ; where no record seems to have been preserved of any act or deed

on his part, until on a certain Saturday a Russian diplomatist, M. Sabouroff, finding that Mr. White was going to England, asked him to take charge of a letter to Baron Brunnow.

The letter having been duly delivered at the Russian Embassy in the Ambassador's absence, Baron Brunnow addressed to Mr. White, from Brighton, a gracious reply.

M. Sabouroff's letter was dated "Samedi" only. The inscription at the head of the Baron's epistle is a little more explicit, and it appears from the postmark on the envelope that it was sent out for delivery in the year 1862. Here is the document; one of the first communications received by Mr. White from a diplomatist of the highest rank :

"BRIGHTON, *Vendredi Matin*,  
"5, MARINE TERRACE.

"CHER MONSIEUR WHITE,

"Vous êtes bien aimable de me proposer de venir me voir à Brighton.

"Si cela ne vous dérangeait pas trop, nous serions charmés, ma femme et moi, d'avoir le plaisir de vous voir chez nous à l'heure de notre luncheon (deux heures), tel jour qu'il vous serait agréable de choisir.

"Ayez la bonté, seulement, de me faire savoir le jour qui pourrait vous convenir le mieux.

"Si Dimanche pouvait vous être agréable nous vous attendrons avec un égal plaisir ce jour-là comme un autre.

"Recevez, cher Monsieur White, l'assurance renouvelée de mes sentiments les plus distingués.

"BRUNNOW."

Neither M. Sabouroff nor Baron Brunnow could have had any idea that the Vice-Consul at Warsaw (Mr. White had now been promoted to that dignity) would some day be made the subject of a big biography in which their letters to him would be introduced; or they would, perhaps, have been more careful in dating them.

The same may be said of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Malmesbury, and other eminent correspondents of this period, some of whom in writing to Mr. White give only the day of the month, others only the day of the week. In these cases the date may sometimes be ascertained through the postmark on the envelope, sometimes by the date of a letter of reply.

On a certain "Friday" the Marquis of Lansdowne writes as follows :

"Lord Lansdowne has the pleasure of enclosing to Mr. White a note of introduction for Lord J. Russell agreeably to his desire."

Mr. White seems to have sent on the letter of introduction to Lord John Russell with a note from himself; and after a time came the following by way of reply :

"Lady John Russell presents her compliments to Mr. White, and begs to say that Lord John Russell and she will have much pleasure in seeing him any Sunday afternoon. She begs to apologise for the delay in answering his note, which she had unfortunately lost.

"PEMBROKE LODGE, RICHMOND,  
"July 13th, 1861."

In 1863 Mr. White received a letter of introduction to Lord Malmesbury, forwarded it, and obtained the following reply :

"Lord Malmesbury presents his compliments to Mr. White, and will have the pleasure of seeing him at 11.30 on Friday or Saturday as may best suit his convenience.

"19, STRATFORD PLACE,  
"September 15th (1863)."

In the contents of the preceding letters there is certainly nothing remarkable. But they at least show that when only Vice-Consul, or even Consular Clerk, Mr. White had a



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view to much higher things, and made a point of cultivating influential acquaintances. He was already on friendly terms with the Russian Ambassador to the English Court, and with two English noblemen, one of whom had been Foreign Secretary, while the other actually held that post. Of the two Foreign Secretaries, past and present, one was a Conservative, the other a Whig; and Mr. White went down to Brighton to lunch with the Russian Ambassador just when the Poles were preparing to rise against the power of the Tsar.

Never at any period of his career did Mr. White allow himself to be affected by the "*surtout pas de zèle*" maxim; excellent from a chief addressing a subordinate whom he does not wish to be too officious, but ridiculous if adopted as a principle of action by the subordinate himself or by an aspirant for success at any stage of his promotion.

Mr. White had become known to the Earl of Clarendon, on being attached to the Warsaw Consulate in 1857, and he made Lord Clarendon's personal acquaintance in 1860, when he received several letters from him, including one on the subject of Cracow, concerning which there had been some intention of asking questions in Parliament.

"No questions are now likely to be asked about Cracow in the House of Lords," wrote Lord Clarendon, March 25, 1860. "Otherwise, I would apply to you."

Cracow, it need scarcely be said, has been for more than fifty years under Austrian government.

From the beginning of the Polish patriotic manifestations of 1861, Mr. White was brought into constant official communication with Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office, with Lord Napier at St. Petersburg, and Lord Augustus Loftus at Berlin.

Lord Napier took the greatest interest in the im-

portant measures of reform introduced by the Emperor Alexander II., both in Russia and in the kingdom of Poland. He studied them, appreciated them, and wished them all possible success. He was at the same time grieved to hear of the violence with which certain patriotic manifestations at Warsaw, first tolerated, afterwards forbidden, were ultimately suppressed. Projects of reform one day ; bullets and bayonets the day afterwards. What more natural than that people in the mass should have been more impressed by the lead and steel than by the paper documents ?

Lord Napier, however, had confidence in the good intentions of the Russian Government ; and this confidence was fully shared by Lord Augustus Loftus, who, on May 12, 1861, wrote to Mr. White from Berlin the following letter :

“ The Government here are watching with much interest the events in Poland, but they show no token of alarm for their Polish population and have taken no military precautions, trusting fully in the forces they now have there and more especially in the loyalty and force of their German population. I have read with great interest your several despatches on the events passing at Warsaw. The language of the Russian Minister here [Baron Budberg] is very moderate and conciliatory, and leads me to suppose that the Government are desirous, by making large concessions, to win over to their side the Moderate Party. The ‘Provisorium,’ which the state of things may well be termed, existing since 1831, has lasted already too long ; and there appears to be a real desire on the part of the Russian Government to introduce a more liberal system. In my opinion, Poland can only obtain her rights and privileges by means of Russia and not in opposition to her.

“ Believe to remain, dear sir,

“ Yours very truly,

“ AUGUSTUS LOFTUS.”

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The view expressed by Lord Augustus Loftus in the concluding sentence of his letter looks, in the present day, very like a platitude. But the general, the almost universal belief at that time was that just government for Poland could only be obtained through the action of the representatives of the various European States bound together in a menacing league.

A second letter from Lord Augustus Loftus, written at Berlin, when he had just returned from a visit to Vienna, shows what impression had been made upon him a year later by the appointment of the Grand-Duke Constantine to the Vice-Royalty of Poland :

"BERLIN, *June 8th*, 1862.

"DEAR SIR,

"I learn that the Grand-Duke Constantine's appointment is received at Vienna with some doubt and apprehension as he is considered to be imbued with Panslavist tendencies, which in the course of time might prove attractive to Poles beyond the present Polish limits.

"For my part, I regard this appointment as an event of considerable importance, and likely to lead to the formation of an independent Polish kingdom under the Grand-Duke Constantine. Such a plan would not be wholly distasteful to the Muscovite Russian Party, who would be glad to be rid of the embarrassment of Poland, provided that Russia could succeed in indemnifying herself in the East."

It has been seen that Mr. White was first appointed to the Warsaw Consulate on the recommendation of General Mansfield, who, on his departure, in 1857, for India was replaced by Colonel Simmons, R.E. (now Field-Marshal Sir John Lintorn Simmons); who obtained for Mr. White the appointment of Vice-Consul with a salary of £200 a year.

Colonel Simmons was followed at Warsaw by Colonel

(afterwards Sir Edward) Stanton, R.E.; and until the year 1861 (*Consule Stanton*) Poland passed through a period of profound peace. She was no more independent, nor, in a legal sense, self-governing than under the reign of Nicholas. But she was ruled with humanity. She was scarcely, indeed, ruled at all.

Under the Emperor Nicholas, Poland had been so severely crushed that when Russia found herself at war with England, France, Turkey, and Sardinia, the Poles did not venture to raise a finger. Half a dozen years afterwards, beneath the mildest rule, they took up arms against a generous, kind-hearted sovereign, whose benevolence had been mistaken for weakness. Under Nicholas the secret police was always at work, and the army was recruited by a system not of conscription, but of simple proscription. Just as on Russian estates the proprietors were expected to furnish a list of available recruits, whom they selected at will, so throughout Poland recruitment was effected on the reports and through the agency of the political police.

From the creation, by the Vienna Congress, of the new kingdom in 1815 up to the rebellion of 1830, Poland possessed her own national army, which after the suppression of the insurrection was naturally abolished. Then came the odious system of forced recruitment under which young men of rebellious tendencies, of patriotic feeling, or even of high aspirations were marked down on a black list as dangerous characters, and at the proper moment incorporated in the Russian Army.

It has been already mentioned that the old Nicholas system of recruitment was, soon after the accession of Alexander II., formally done away with; though there was as yet no occasion for the new law, borrowed from France, to be put in force. All recruitment had stopped;

and the Warsaw garrison, so formidable under the previous reign, had been allowed to dwindle down to only a few thousand men. Russia was suffering from a bad headache; the natural consequence of the ruinous war from which she had just emerged. She had ceased to be aggressive, whether towards her neighbours or towards her own subjects.

Poles, like Russians, were still liable to arbitrary arrest followed by unexplained imprisonment and exile without specified cause. But in the Polish jails there were, as a matter of fact, no political prisoners.

As for reforms in Poland, was not the new attitude of the Government towards its subjects in itself a reform? Some reforms, however, of a positive kind were being undertaken by the Poles themselves, without, for a time, being discountenanced by the Russian Government.

Soon after the accession of the Emperor Alexander II., and with his express sanction, the Agricultural Society of the Kingdom of Poland had been formed under the Presidency of Count Andrew Zamoyski. The Association was composed of landed proprietors to the number of some four thousand; and its meetings were attended by delegates from the agricultural societies of Posen, Cracow, and Lemberg; the chief cities, that is to say, of Austrian and Prussian Poland.

The work which, above all, occupied the attention of the Society was a project for relieving the peasantry, still in a state of mitigated serfdom, from taskwork, and making over to them the portions of land which they had hitherto cultivated in return for labour required from them on his own particular land by the manorial proprietor.

After discussing the project for some considerable time, the Society ended by adopting it, voting the measure

just as though the Agricultural Association had been a legislative assembly. Disturbances, meanwhile, suppressed with violence and bloodshed by the troops, broke out in the streets of Warsaw on the very day that the Agricultural Society performed its quasi-political act. It had been made to play a part in certain manifestations, which, regarded at first as harmless, had at last assumed a threatening if not a dangerous character; and under these circumstances the Association was dissolved. The chief reason, however, for dissolving it, was that it had assumed political functions.

The dissolution of the Agricultural Society was soon to be followed by important reforms, the work of a Polish magnate, the Marquis Wielopolski, who had obtained for them the sanction of the Emperor.

Unfortunately the Marquis Wielopolski, the author of the new reforms, was the most unpopular man in Poland. Generally mistrusted by reason of his well-known desire to raise up his native land through the action of Russia—which implied obedience and loyalty as conditions precedent—he was disliked by his equals and associates on account of his haughty and overbearing disposition.

Lord Napier, in one of his despatches on the subject of the Wielopolski reforms, speaks with personal knowledge and regret of the Marquis's "inability to brook contradiction."

The following letters from Lord Napier to Mr. White show the views taken of Polish affairs at St. Petersburg shortly before the insurrection:

"ST. PETERSBURG,  
"July 2nd, 1862.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I thank you very much for your last letter and despatches. You say very truly that the aspect of affairs at Warsaw at the moment of which you write was more

encouraging than that of St. Petersburg. But your prospects are dimmed immediately afterwards by the attempt upon General Lüders. I know that the day before the news reached the Emperor of that incident very encouraging impressions had been sent up of the state of public feeling in Poland, and the Government were congratulating themselves on the success of Marquis Wielopolski's first proceedings, when the intelligence of the attempted assassination arrived. The Emperor at once decided that the Grand-Duke should go down, and the Grand-Duke came at the same moment spontaneously to the same conclusion.

"The Grand-Duchess would not be left behind, though she was so far advanced towards her confinement. You have, therefore, a prompt and conciliatory policy in return for the very act which was designed to frustrate it. A strong Government generally profits by the excesses of its adversaries, and I believe the Russian Government will derive advantage ultimately both from the incendiary fires and the abortive assassination."

"ST. PETERSBURG,  
"October 22nd, 1862.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"No one could hail with more satisfaction than I the symptoms of improvement in Poland which your last despatches indicate. I do hope that these good impressions will be confirmed. No one who views these matters with a dispassionate eye can doubt the good intentions of the Emperor towards Poland, to the extent of establishing in that country a liberal, enlightened administration, with some elements of a national character. On this basis the representative system must be raised at a later period. National independence is out of the question. At least, it is not worth while seriously speculating upon a contingency so remote and chimerical.

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"NAPIER.

"P.S.—You have of course seen what may truly be called the greatest measure of law-reform which the world ever saw: the introduction of the Judicial Institutions of France into Russia. The code itself will, I presume, soon follow."

"ST. PETERSBURG,

"December 28th, 1862.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I thank you very sincerely for your interesting letter, which renews my hopes which I have never abandoned of a better future for Poland under the Emperor and Wielopolski. The Grand-Duke has a glorious mission; and one less difficult, but also arduous and honourable, has just been delegated to his brother, the Grand-Duke Michael. It is a very fine thing to see the Princes of the Imperial family becoming the instruments of an enlightened and conciliatory policy in the disordered and neglected provinces of the Empire. In the Caucasus the whole civil administration has to be recast in conformity with the principles now in vogue. The Grand-Duke will go with a kindly and ingenuous mind, susceptible of just impressions. His character will probably gain firmness when he has filled for some time an independent and responsible position.

"I am very grateful to Marquis Wielopolski for his amiable recollections and for the message which he confided to you. I beg you will present or forward this letter to him.

"Believe me,

"Yours faithfully,

"NAPIER.

"TO W. A. WHITE, ESQ."

The arrival of the Grand-Duke Constantine at Warsaw, accompanied by the Marquis Wielopolski, did not have the effect that might reasonably have been anticipated. More than once the Russian troops had fired upon the people—assembling in crowds and refusing to disperse; and it was asked whether the Emperor thought he could atone for such injuries by sending his brother to Poland as Viceroy. What the arrival of the Grand-Duke and Wielopolski really meant was that, even if the extreme revolutionary party persisted in committing outrages the Government would, all the same, persist in introducing the promised reforms.



Until this time the conduct of the Russians in Warsaw had been marked by good intentions, evil actions, and much indecision. The system of recruitment by designation had been replaced by conscription through ballot, as in France—legally, that is to say ; for, as a matter of fact, there had been no recruitment since the Crimean War. A Polish Council of State, together with elective district and municipal councils, had been formed ; and a circular was despatched to the various foreign governments announcing the introduction of these reforms. They were represented, however, by the Poles abroad as absolutely without value ; and neither in England nor in France did the general public pay any attention to them. News, on the other hand, was constantly arriving of excesses committed by the Russian soldiery in dispersing crowds, or in ejecting from churches congregations who had assembled ostensibly for religious observances, in reality for patriotic manifestations.

The whole population of Warsaw, men and women, had gone into mourning ; and the news of this unanimous protest against an intolerable state of things quite overshadowed such good effects as might have been produced abroad by the knowledge that the Marquis and the Grand-Duke were persisting, notwithstanding the most violent opposition, in introducing their remedial measures.

General Prince Gortchakoff had begun by giving up Warsaw to the care of the Poles and allowing their patriotic manifestations to take place without being watched either by troops or by police, other than their own special constables. He ended by ordering volley after volley to be fired on an unresisting, unarmed crowd. A few months later he died, after giving orders that he should be buried not at Warsaw, but at Sebastopol, where he had greatly distinguished himself during the siege.

The Russians charged him with having fostered the insurrection by his mildness; while the Poles accused him of having provoked it by his severity.

He was succeeded by three other military governors, the last of whom was that General Lüders who was shot at and badly wounded just before the arrival of the Grand-Duke Constantine.

It having been proposed that religious services should be performed everywhere in memory of Kosciuszko, the Government absolutely forbade them. The formal *veto* remained, however, without effect. Soon after the beginning of mass, one of the principal churches was surrounded by troops. Eighteen hours later, during which time a strict siege had been maintained, the soldiers, at four in the morning, entered the church and made several thousand arrests.

"The deeds of profanation committed yesterday," wrote the Vicar-General of the diocese in a letter to the Chief of the Government, "have filled the inhabitants of the entire country with indignation and horror. Acts such as these are beyond the reach of language and carry us back to the times of Attila."

To mark its sense of the outrage committed, the Consistory ordered every church in Warsaw to be closed.

The Vicar-General, tried by court-martial, was sentenced to death, though the punishment awarded by the military tribunal was at once replaced by exile to Siberia.

To illustrate the anarchical character of the tyranny that was now being practised in Poland it must be mentioned that the siege of the churches, ordered by General Gerstenschweig, the military governor, was violently condemned by Count Lambert, the civil governor, who was a Catholic; and, at the end of a furious altercation, General Gerstenschweig blew his brains

out, while Count Lambert quitted Warsaw and even Europe.

One of the first acts of Constantine was to annul the Vicar-General's sentence of exile; and one of the first acts of the sworn revolutionists was to fire at and wound the Grand-Duke whom they mistrusted, *et dona ferentim*.

Undeterred by the attack made upon him, the new Viceroy went on with his reforms. Administrative autonomy of the most complete kind had been formally introduced, and every Russian functionary was now withdrawn from the Civil Service to be replaced by a Pole.

The Russians regarded this measure as an act of treachery on the part of Wielopolski, who wished, they said, to prepare the way for a great national uprising; while the Grand-Duke Constantine in consenting to it was accused of sacrificing to his own personal ambition the interests of Russia.

The Russians overrated the significance of the Wielopolski reforms almost as much as the Poles undervalued them. But they saw that if the measures were favourably accepted, Poland would be separated from Russia by her Government without being united to her by any feeling of common interest. They also perceived that the kingdom of Poland, with its Polish university and gymnasiums, its Polish Council of State, and its district and municipal councils would become a centre of attraction to the Poles of the old Polish provinces incorporated with the Russian Empire.

The Prussians believed that Poland and the Wielopolski system would exercise too much influence on Posen; and the Russian Government was advised from Berlin not to make concessions to its discontented Polish subjects, but to assume towards them an attitude of decision and restore order by military means.

An Austrian general of considerable political acumen said to an English friend, when it had already become evident that the Poles would not accept the Wielopolski system :

"They think they understand their own interests, but we also believe that we know ours; and when we found that Wielopolski's scheme was rejected we could not contain ourselves for joy. If the system devised by the Marquis had been adopted by his countrymen, Warsaw and the Polish 'kingdom' would have become so intensely Polish, and would have exercised such an irresistible attraction on all the other portions of ancient Poland, that in six months we should have lost Galicia."

There was one idea by which numbers of Poles were haunted, that could not possibly be brought forward in public discussion; an idea which had been present to many imaginative minds ever since the liberation of Italy by Napoleon III. Would they not, if they rose against Russia, be helped by the great liberator of suffering nationalities? Italy had never asked Austria for reforms; the only reform she cared for being the withdrawal of Austrian troops from Lombardy and Venetia. In due time, however, Napoleon III. had driven the Austrian garrison out of Lombardy, as in proper season at the fit opportunity he would surely expel the Russian garrison from Poland.

To accept Wielopolski's system and trust to Russia for further reforms would be to abandon all hope of a French intervention, of which some encouraging signs had already shown themselves. Sympathetic articles and pamphlets had been published very numerously at Paris; and Poles of high position were known to have had conversations on the subject with the Emperor Napoleon, who was quite prepared, he said, to take up the cause of Poland "as soon as he had settled the Mexican question."

Among Sir William White's papers, I find a translation of a proclamation issued by the revolutionary government of Poland, the so-called "National Junta," just after the conscription had been carried out. It begins with a call to arms, and ends by a decree of outlawry against Wielopolski and "all the criminal band who have taken part in the recruitment." "It is permitted," concludes the proclamation, "to every one to judge and to execute them without incurring any sort of responsibility, either before God or the country."

As a general statement of the case, nothing could have been fairer than Lord Napier's despatch on the subject of the forced and arbitrary recruitment—which also Sir William White had preserved. He described it as "a design to make a clean sweep of the revolutionary youth of Poland, to shut up the most dangerous spirits in the restraints of the Russian Army, to kidnap the opposition, and carry it off to Siberia or the Caucasus. This proposal, so totally out of keeping with the humane and intelligent order of things recently inaugurated in Poland," continued Lord Napier, "has created great surprise among many persons well affected towards the Russian Government; for it was apprehended, that even if the Government should succeed in disposing of a number of dangerous antagonists, yet the moral obloquy attending this act would greatly outweigh the material advantage to be gained. It seemed to my humble judgment to be the single considerable error committed in Poland since the nomination of Marquis Wielopolski."

The Russians, knowing that Mr. White spoke Polish perfectly, and that he had numbers of Polish friends, suspected him of undue sympathy for the Poles. But Colonel Stanton and Mr. White never allowed themselves to be blinded by Polish predilections, and some of their

published reports on the subject of the Polish disturbances were looked upon by important newspapers in England as far too Russian. Thus Colonel Stanton (with whom Mr. White was absolutely at one) was specially condemned by the *Saturday Review* as "one of those military officials in whose eyes the only thing important is the preservation of order."

Most of the consular despatches were addressed to Lord Napier at St. Petersburg, and Lord Napier's letters in reply show how well he was satisfied with them. Some of them, however, were sent direct to Lord Russell; who, after the outbreak of 1863, when the time seemed to have come for organising against Russia a diplomatic demonstration on the part of all Europe, called Mr. White to London in order that he might be at hand should the Foreign Minister need by chance his assistance and advice. The noble earl, however, showed himself quite equal to the occasion. In his younger days he was equally ready, according to a great humourist, to take the command of the Channel Fleet, or perform the operation for stone; and in 1863 it was mere child's play for him to draw up a list of concessions which the Russian Government had only to publish in order at once to pacify Poland.

He may have taken counsel from some of the leading members of the Polish emigration in London, but he never thought of consulting Mr. White; than whom no one was better acquainted with the exact nature of the concessions already made to the Poles and the concessions which, under favourable conditions, might yet be granted to them.

An intense believer in constitutional government wherever and however applied, it at once occurred to Lord Russell when the insurrection of 1863 broke out, that it

must be due to the withdrawal of the constitution of 1815, thirty-three years previously—the same harmless, necessary constitution that Napoleon had granted in 1807 to the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw.

In this view he was doubtless encouraged by a very distinguished Pole, who some months afterwards prevailed upon him to make the unfortunate declaration—so soon to be withdrawn—that by refusing to restore the famous constitution of 1815 Russia had forfeited her rights over the Polish kingdom.

Already on March 2, some five weeks after the outbreak of the insurrection, Lord Russell had sent a despatch to St. Petersburg reminding the Russian Government, through Lord Napier, that the stipulations of the treaty of Vienna in respect to Poland had long ceased to be observed, and advising as the best means of pacifying the country the formation of a National Diet and the introduction of a National Administration.

A few days afterwards his Lordship addressed a circular to the English representatives abroad, enclosing a copy of his despatch, and directing them to recommend “a communication of similar views by the representative at St. Petersburg of the Powers who were parties to the treaty of June, 1815.”

A National Administration the Poles, thanks to Wielopolski, already possessed in the completest possible form; an administration in which every official was a Pole and consequently not one a Russian.

A Diet they did not possess. But to demand its establishment and to attempt to procure similar demands from the representatives of all foreign Powers who were parties to the treaty of 1815 was to let the Poles understand that they had formidable backers in Europe, and that the insurrection, powerless in itself, had now

something to rest upon. The Russian Government would not be likely to accede to the demands pressed upon it by foreign Powers; and the Poles reflected with natural delight that what Prince Gortchakoff called "an interchange of ideas" might possibly in the end lead to an interchange of bullets.

In the autumn of 1862 Mr. White made the acquaintance of Messrs. Walker and Whicher, two English police officials, the precise object of whose visit will be best understood from the following letter which Baron Brunnow, Russian Ambassador in London, addressed in September, 1862, to the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey.

"The Grand-Duke Constantine during his former stay in this country was particularly impressed by the beneficial influence which your police regulations exercise for the maintenance of good order, legality, and public security. His Imperial Highness is desirous of establishing a similar institution in the kingdom of Poland, whose welfare is now intrusted to his care by H.M. the Emperor. The Grand-Duke is the more anxious to introduce a useful reform into this branch of the public service, as such a reform may enable him to put an end as soon as possible to the now existing martial law, and to replace the country under the rule of the regular civil administrators."

After spending a few weeks in Warsaw, Messrs. Walker and Whicher wrote to their chief, Sir Richard Mayne, as follows :

"Everything seems very quiet, and no further attempts at assassination have been made, although it is feared that similar acts will be repeated; but every precaution is taken to prevent them. Indeed, the Government seems in a constant state of apprehension."

They added that their mission was kept secret except



from three officials with whom they had been working, 'lest its character should be misunderstood and their personal safety endangered.'

Mr. White received visits also from several of his old Cambridge friends, Lord Stratheden and Campbell, Mr. W. H. Clark (Public Orator), and Dr. Birkbeck, Downing Professor of Law ; also from Mr. Edward Dicey and Mr. W. H. Hall, who afterwards published a very interesting account of what he had seen in insurgent Poland entitled *Polish Experiences*.

Mr. Laurence Oliphant, too, appeared upon the scene, commissioned to travel through various parts of Poland in order to report to the Prime Minister what chance, if any, the insurrection had of success, and how long it was likely to last.

Besides going to Warsaw (whence he made a visit to a camp of insurgents in a not-far-distant wood), he stayed a short time at Cracow, and passed through Galicia to Volhynia and the Ruthenian provinces ; parts of ancient Poland with which the Consulate-General at Warsaw was not called upon to occupy itself, and about which, as a matter of fact, it received little or no information.

Laurence Oliphant's report to Lord Palmerston could only have been to the effect that the insurrection unsupported from abroad must soon die out.

It lasted a considerable time. But it *was* supported from abroad—supported with false hopes.

## CHAPTER III

### COLLAPSE OF INSURRECTION

LORD RUSSELL entertained the highest opinion of Mr. White's abilities, which did not prevent him from cherishing a far higher one of his own. He had already been acquainted with Mr. White for more than two years when, in 1863, he summoned him from Warsaw to London that he might be at hand should any information be required in regard to the demands in favour of Poland which the English Government was on the point of addressing to St. Petersburg. It has already, however, been said that Mr. White was not once consulted by Lord Russell, who preferred to take for his advisers the leading Poles of the emigration; men who had been separated from Poland for upwards of thirty years

"They are like the exiles described by Macaulay in his history," said Sir William White, speaking one day on this very subject. "They think nothing has changed in their country since they left it."

It was much to be regretted; for not only did Lord Russell bring ridicule on himself, his Government, and his country, by asking for concessions which the Russians had already spontaneously made, but he gave them the right to believe that in his demands he was not even sincere—an injustice of which no one with any knowledge of Lord Russell's character would be guilty.

It was hard to believe that with all the European States,

save Prussia, leagued together in favour of Poland, nothing would come of their representations except additional misfortunes for the Poles and a notable increase in the numbers of the Russian Army. There were many Poles who believed in the general efficacy of the diplomatic intervention, and a few who imagined, as all hoped, that it might lead to war; while there were scarcely any who, from beginning to end, felt sure, as they ought to have done, that in the first place England would do nothing, and, as a natural consequence, that France also would refrain from action.

One such, however, was Count Alfred Potoński, afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Austrian Cabinet. He had, at the beginning of his diplomatic career, been attached to the Austrian Embassy in London, where he made the acquaintance of Mr. Charles Greville, author of the famous *Memoirs*. Mr. Greville corresponded with him on all important political events; and in a letter on Polish affairs, which Count Alfred Potoński showed me, he set forth that the London manifestations in favour of Poland would lead to nothing.

"Meetings," he wrote, "will be held, speeches will be made in Parliament, representations will be addressed to the Russian Government; but the excitement will gradually cool down, and all will end in smoke."

"Mr. Greville," said Count Potoński, "judges so correctly, that I always adopt his views; and this time, as on other occasions, I am sure that he is right."

When the fury of the first outbreak had subsided, the progress of the insurrection was regulated more or less perfectly on that of the diplomatic intervention, and the failure of the latter meant the collapse of the former. Prince Gortchakoff had told Lord Russell that his

propositions, as a whole, were unacceptable; and when Lord Russell had informed the Emperor of the French, through M. Drouyn de Lhuys, that his Majesty's proposal to hold a Conference could not be acceded to by the English Government, then all occasion for forming insurgent bands in Galicia, in order to attack the Russians in Poland, had come to an end.

Lord Russell's last performance in connection with the deplorable diplomatic comedy in which he had played an undignified part bordered closely on the tragic. He had wisely refused the Emperor Napoleon's invitation to join his Conference, which was to have deliberated on the most pressing affairs of the moment, with the Polish question before all others. But he went very near war on his own account when, partly of his own accord, partly at the instigation of a distinguished Polish friend, he declared that, by reason of Russia's refusal to restore the Polish constitution of 1815, as guaranteed—at Russia's request—by the leading Powers of Europe, her title to rule in Poland could no longer be recognised, and had, in fact, come to an end.

Informed by telegraph from St. Petersburg that the despatch, if presented, might lead to serious consequences, his Lordship recalled it, and afterwards struck out all the passages in it which referred to the Emperor of Russia's title as King of Poland.

"In the new despatch it is difficult," said Mr. Pope Hennessy in the House of Commons, "to know what has been cut out, but it is "easy to see the scar."

What had really happened was this.

After making a touching little speech at Blairgowrie (a place unknown at that time to fame) on the text of an inscription, "Rest and be thankful," which he had read on some seat provided for the tired wayfarer, Lord

Russell pointed out that there was an end to reform, as to everything else, and that when such reforms as those which had so greatly interested him in the course of a long career had once been obtained, the only thing to do was to "rest and be thankful." He felt it impossible, however, to extend this feeling of composure towards a certain Power which had failed alike in its engagements towards Europe and in its duty towards its own subjects; and all that, in this condition of things, could be said to Russia was that her right to rule in Poland had ceased.

Lord Russell's speech caused infinite joy to the Poles; for they were clever enough to see, that if the English Minister stuck to his words, a breach with Russia could be the only result. An intimate friend of Lord Russell's, Count Ladislas Zamoyski, who with the best possible feelings towards England was, as a matter of course, still better disposed towards his own country, congratulated Lord Russell heartily on the bold, decided character of his Blairgowrie speech.

"I think, too," added Count Ladislas, "that we shall hear more of it. I am not a betting man, but I have promised to give £100 to a charity if you do not within a certain time embody the most important part of your speech in a despatch."

"Well, we shall see," replied Lord Russell; "and I don't think," he added with a smile, "that you will have to pay the money."

Lord Russell wrote his despatch, and sent it off, but only to recall it on a hint to that effect from the English Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

As soon as it was quite clear that all diplomatic negotiations in favour of Poland, whether between the European Powers and Russia, or between England and France, or between England and Russia, as represented

by Lord Russell and by Prince Gortchakoff, had come absolutely to a close, then it was evidently useless to sacrifice any more lives, and the insurrection came to an end.

The Russians saw, moreover, that the time had come for stamping out resistance in every form. The theatres, which throughout the insurrection and for some considerable time preceding it, had remained closed, were now opened by superior authority. For nearly two years every one had worn mourning. To wear mourning, except for near relatives, was now made a punishable offence; and equally so to wear any sort of headgear except the top-hat, the "cylinder of civilisation," as Count Berg called it in his droll proclamation on the subject.

Count Berg, moreover,—most cruel cut of all,—issued cards for a series of balls, at which all the most important personages of the Polish aristocracy were expected to attend.

One afternoon, I met in company with Mr. White a member of one of the most important families in Poland, whose brother had been implicated in the insurrection. In the course of conversation, he said that he was going that evening to the first of Count Berg's receptions. Possibly I looked a little astonished, for he at once added:

"It is better to put on a white cravat for half an hour than to have our Lithuanian estates confiscated."

Before taking leave of Poland I may say a few words as to the composition and character of the Consular body at Warsaw at the time when Mr. White belonged to it as English Vice-Consul. The establishment of Consulates in Poland was due to the Emperor Nicholas, who, after the suppression of the rebellion of 1830, showed in many ways, now advantageous, now injurious to the Poles, that he still regarded the "Congress

Kingdom " as a separate State under the Russian Crown. He sent to Siberia thousands of Poles from the Polish provinces incorporated with the Russian Empire, but exiled no one from the kingdom ; which did not prevent numbers of its inhabitants, mistrustful of the Imperial mercy, from exiling themselves—chiefly to Paris and to London. The refugees, however, were for the most part Lithuanians.

The Emperor Nicholas recognised the validity of the banknotes and bonds issued by the Insurrectionary Government ; but while ordering them to be paid on presentation, charged the money to the Treasury of the kingdom, regarded as a separate State.

In 1849 he intervened with an armed force in Austria, convinced that the establishment of Hungarian independence would be followed by an attempt on the part of the Hungarians, with their Polish legion in the vanguard, to conquer the independence of Poland. Under these circumstances he charged the cost of the intervention to the Poles, in whose interest he claimed to have undertaken it.

The French Consul-General in 1863 was M. de Valb  zen, who had previously been Consul at Calcutta, where he had formed favourable opinions of the English and of their rule in India. After the suppression of the insurrection in Poland he retired with the rank of *Ministre en Disponibilit  * ; eligible, that is to say, for a Legation which he was never likely to receive.

The Austrian Consul-General was Baron Von Lederer, who, after the insurrection, was appointed Minister at Washington.

Colonel Stanton, R.E., the English Consul-General, was promoted soon after the restoration of "Order" to be Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent at Alexandria,

receiving at the same time the K.C.B. The English, French, and Austrian Consuls were excellent friends; and, partly perhaps because their Governments were intervening on behalf of Poland, were well received and much sought after in Polish society.

The Prussian Consul-General, representing a Power which had said plainly from the first that it was opposed to insurrection in Poland, which refused to join the European intervention on behalf of the Poles, and which justified its attitude by pointing out that the independence of the Polish kingdom would necessitate an addition to the Prussian Army of a hundred thousand men; this representative of a candid if cynical Government was looked upon, through no fault of his own, with but little favour. In private conversation he did the fullest justice to the patriotism of the Poles, while professing not to understand it.

*"Faire du patriotisme sur le Boulevard des Italiens?"* he once said to me. *"Oui, je comprends cela! Mais ici? c'est de la folie!"*

The only complaint Baron Von Lederer had to make of the Poles was that they attached too much importance to the assistance rendered by Sobieski to Austria in 1683. He kept always at hand a history of the defence of Vienna against the Turks, ready on the slightest provocation from a Polish visitor to show him what an important part in the decisive battle had been taken by the Duke of Lorraine and his numerous German regiments.

Two Prussian officers sent to Poland as military commissioners were nowhere received as welcome guests except of course at the foreign Consulates and especially the English Consulate, where the chief was himself a soldier. As for the Poles, they could not help feeling that if by some marvellous chance the insurrection showed



signs of success, a single word from the Prussian military commissioners would cause their Government to take action against it. One of these officers, Colonel (now General) Verdy du Vernois (whom I afterwards met in the Franco-German War, at the King's headquarters), became one of Sir William White's most intimate friends, especially after his promotion to the Consulate at Dantzic, whence his duties called him often to Berlin.

Count Bismarck was Foreign Minister at the time ; and he was well rewarded for his decided attitude in favour of Russia when, immediately after the Polish insurrection, the Schleswig-Holstein Question again showed itself ; for this time Russia took the German side.

His foresight and determination were once more rewarded when, in 1866, Russia left Prussia a free hand in regard to Austria ; and finally, in 1870, when a still greater service was rendered to his country by Russia's watchful bearing towards Austria, at a moment when Prussia thought it quite probable that Austria would render assistance to the French—or the Sixth Prussian Corps would not at the beginning of the campaign have been kept in observation on the Silesian frontier.

Austria in connection with the Polish insurrection played a double part. Siding diplomatically with France and England she co-operated, through occasional action against Galician insurgents, with Russia ; while, by tolerating up to a certain point the formation of insurgent bands on Austro-Polish territory, she showed her powerful neighbour that she could at any time, by direct encouragement, bring about a formidable insurrection in the Polish kingdom.

The French, English, and Austrian Consuls—especially the English and the French—used to be asked, questioned, and entreated on the subject of the hoped-for

intervention. They of course knew nothing more than was known to many other persons: the negotiations being carried on not with the authorities at Warsaw, but with the Government at St. Petersburg. So eager, so overstrained was the popular anxiety on the subject that groups of excited patriots might sometimes be seen on the banks of the Vistula, gazing down the stream to see if there were any signs of the English fleet coming up from Dantzic.

In the absence of human intervention, divine aid was looked for; and there was a pear-tree in the Saxon Gardens above which daily at noon multitudes of devout Poles used to declare that they saw a cross of fire in the heavens. As a persistent belief in the miraculous apparition might possibly have led to local troubles, the Russians, in a coarsely practical manner, cut down the pear-tree; when the promise of victory was no longer seen.

Poland in 1863 was still governed as a separate kingdom with its own particular departments of state. Baron Osten Sacken was Director of Foreign Affairs; M. de Laski, Director of Finance. One of the most amiable and best intentioned of the high officials was the Marquis Paulucci, Chief of Police at the beginning of the patriotic manifestations which, little by little, led to the armed insurrection. The Polish organisers of one particular demonstration gave him their word (he himself told me) that if everything was left to them, and neither troops nor police appeared on the scene, there should be nothing resembling a breach of the peace; and they kept their promise.

"They are not then a difficult people to govern?" I said to the Marquis.

"*On peut les mener avec un fil de soie,*" he replied.

## CHAPTER IV

### FROM WARSAW TO DANTZIC

MR. WHITE now thought only of leaving Poland. Lord Napier, who had been much pleased with his despatches from Warsaw during the insurrection, had been appointed Ambassador at Berlin, and he had promised Mr. White to recommend him for a Consulate in Prussia on the first opportunity.

Lord Augustus Loftus, in his valuable and interesting *Memoirs* tells us that he also recommended Mr. White for promotion.

Apart from the two ambassadorial recommendations, Mr. White had written to Lord Clarendon, requesting him to do his best towards obtaining for him the Dantzic Consulate which at the time seemed on the point of becoming vacant through the serious illness of its occupant. Lord Clarendon's reply was as follows :

" Feb. 3/64.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" Lord Russell has always appeared to be kindly disposed towards you on the different occasions when I have spoken to him on your behalf ; and I have every reason to expect that matters will be, if they have not already been, arranged according to your wishes, though it is probable that a Consul-General will not be retained at Dantzic. I hope the unfortunate Poles will cease to delude themselves with hopes of *any* foreign assistance.

" Yours very faithfully,  
" CLARENDON."

"Delude themselves" is good! Who first deluded them?

The Poles are probably the most deluded nation on the face of the earth. Whether direct oppression drives them, or fancied opportunity tempts them to insurrection, their rising is in either case supported by the West of Europe; which, as soon as it has sufficiently roused the indignation and provoked the alarm of their rulers; as soon as by its evident wish and apparent intention to intervene, it has produced a genuine Reign of Terror, then retreats, saying that it has done all it was possible to do, and that beyond moral (*i.e.*, grossly immoral) support it cannot go.

On September 17, 1864, Mr. White had still heard nothing more about the Dantzic Consulate. Much vexed at the delay, he now addressed Lord Russell in a direct manner on the subject. Here is his letter:

"S. VILLA, BATH,

"17 September, 1864.

"MY LORD,

"Fifteen months ago, when taking leave of your lordship on returning to my post, you were pleased to hold out hopes to me that my claims to preferment should not be overlooked whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself.

"I am afraid that no such opportunity has as yet occurred, as it is acknowledged on all sides that the claims of real merit always find their due appreciation under your lordship in the bestowal of Consular patronage.

"However unwilling I am to trouble your lordship so often on personal matters, I wish to submit respectfully to your consideration a circumstance connected with my present appointment which has not yet been prominently enough brought forward, and as I have to return to Warsaw without another opportunity of paying my respects to your lordship, I venture to make this official communication.

"Eight years ago, when on the resumption of Diplomatic

relations with Russia, General, now Sir, William Rose Mansfield was appointed Consul-General in Poland, he put himself in communication with me immediately on his arrival at Warsaw, and a few months afterwards he offered me an appointment, having been authorised to do so by the then Secretary of State; and in urging my acceptance of it, Sir William relied chiefly on the fact that my education and varied experience had qualified me for a service in which by such an opening I could look forward to an honourable promotion.

"Whether these services, however humble and subordinate, have been deserving of any such reward, your lordship is certainly the best judge, and I am quite willing to abide by that judgment, and quite ready to accept any appointment in which your lordship will consider that I may be employed with advantage to the public service.

"This much, however, I hope I may be allowed to state without being thought either presumptuous or as taking too great a liberty—*i.e.*, that my present remuneration, and even my present position are not only in my own opinion, but also in the estimate, whether of my friends, or of persons by no means favourable to me, quite inadequate, and that I should never have accepted it when it was offered me in February, 1857, if I had not looked upon it as a temporary employment and one of probation.

"I have to apologise to your lordship for the free and open manner in which I have presumed to express myself, but I have been to a certain extent encouraged to do so by the invariable personal kindness shown me by your lordship,

"I have, etc.,

"W. A. WHITE.

"THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

"THE EARL RUSSELL &C. K.G., &C."

It was not until a month later that Mr. White was informed that the Consulate, which he had been expecting for nearly a year, would now be given to him. On November 15, 1864, Lord Clarendon wrote to him as follows:

"A domestic affliction has prevented my writing to you sooner. But I lost no time in applying to the F. O.

in your favour when I heard of Mr. Plow's death, and I have been informed that you will be gazetted in a few days. I am sorry to say, however, that Dantzic is no longer to be a Consulate-*General* and that the salary is to be reduced. But it will be promotion for you and removal from Warsaw."

On the same day, Lord Russell addressed to Mr. White this official notification of his appointment.

" 37, CHESHAM PLACE,  
" BELGRAVE SQUARE,  
" Nov. 15/64.

" DEAR MR. WHITE,

I have great pleasure in informing you that the Queen has approved of your being appointed Consul at Dantzic. The salary will be, I believe, £600 a year. A small sum besides will be allowed for office expenses.

" I remain,

" Yours truly,

" RUSSELL."

At Dantzic, Mr. White was still in Poland ; in a corner, that is to say, of the ancient Poland that was partitioned as a first operation in 1772. The buildings, the antiquities of the city recall in many ways its past history, especially the Church of St. Mary, with its celebrated picture of the Last Judgment—the work, according to an ancient tradition, of St. Methodius, who, in company with St. Cyril, converted the Slavonians to Christianity. Painted by Hans Memling, and sent from Bruges as a present to the Pope, the picture was captured at sea by a Dantzic pirate who, with admirable piety, gave it to the church of his native town.

After the reduction of Dantzic by the French in 1807, Napoleon sent Memling's "Last Judgment" as a trophy of war to Paris, where it remained until 1815 ; in which year, with the various works of art carried away from so many cities, it was restored to its legitimate owners.

Even in Peter the Great's time Dantzic was scarcely under Polish Government ; though it was not by the King of Prussia (who was ultimately to take possession of it), but by the Tsar of Russia that it was ruled. Already in 1716 there was a scheme afloat for dismembering Poland, by which Prussia, through the annexation of Polish territory was to join together and "round off" her disconnected provinces, Russia compensating herself in Lithuania, and Austria in Galicia ; while what would remain of Poland after these amputations was to be made an hereditary kingdom under the sovereignty of King Augustus of Saxony. Peter, however, rejected this plan, put forward by Frederick I. of Prussia, even as Catherine rejected for some time the plan of dismemberment proposed, with ultimate success, by Frederick II. ; the reason in each case being that Russia wished to preserve throughout Poland her political and military preponderance, and cared little for a slice of Polish territory if slices were also to be appropriated by her Western neighbours.

- 、 Peter imposed his will on the municipal authorities of Dantzic without troubling himself in the slightest degree about the Polish Government, which on its side showed itself utterly careless as to Peter's goings on. When King Augustus arrived to hold a conference with Peter, the sovereign of Poland seems to have thought it quite natural that the Tsar of Russia should levy fines at Dantzic, exact contributions, and cause ships to be constructed. Peter had ordered the city to supply four cruisers with twelve guns each, or, in default, to furnish two hundred thousand gulden for the purchase of ships, for provisioning the ships, and for paying the sailors. As the town council would not accept the terms, Peter declared Dantzic a hostile city, and ordered General Dolgorouky,

who was in occupation with a large force, to take vigorous measures against it.

Peter had left Dantzic and was at Amsterdam when the Dantzic municipality sent an envoy to him with a convention by which it bound itself to furnish three armed frigates and a sum of one hundred and forty thousand thalers in silver; Peter granting Dantzic in return "a confirmation of its privileges."

Russia had, at that time practically the absolute command of a fine port on the Baltic; which she lost by the Partition of Poland half a century later. It was not, however, until the third Partition, in 1795, that Dantzic was definitively acquired by Prussia; which for many years beforehand had cast longing eyes on the ancient city, the once impregnable fortress.

When first threatened by the Prussians, Dantzic appealed to Russia for help. But the Russians had lost their chance in this direction, and Dantzic fell to the lot of Prussia.

In 1807 Dantzic was taken by the French, and it was for a few years the seaport of the Napoleonic "Grand Duchy of Warsaw," when, as a consequence of the retreat from Moscow, it fell into the power of the Russians. But Dantzic was restored to Prussia in 1815, at the Congress of Vienna; the new "Kingdom of Poland" being at the same time assigned to Russia.

At Warsaw Mr. White had seen Slavonians contending against the dominion of other Slavonians.

At Dantzic he found himself in a once Slavonic city which had become German.

At Belgrade he was to see a once Turk-governed Slavonic city recover, with the country of which it was the capital, its Slavonic character and its complete independence.



Thus during the first twenty-one years of his consular and diplomatic career, he saw the whole of the Slavonic world as in a microcosm.

The Russians, themselves Slavonic with a mixture, dominate other Slavonians; the Germans absorb them; the Turks disappear before them.

It was in 1865 that Mr. White arrived at Dantzic in view of permanent residence. The new Consul had at once to occupy himself with German affairs, and his first serious piece of work was a report on the commerce of Dantzic, which, by a pardonable development, he enlarged into a report on the commerce of Germany in general. *Surtout beaucoup de zèle* was always his maxim.

At Warsaw the duties of the Consul-General are almost exclusively political, though from time to time reports have been written from the Warsaw Consulate on the subject of Polish manufactures and commerce. A very remarkable report was once shown to me by Mr. White the work of one of his predecessors, in which it was pointed out that the country was growing rich, prosperous,—and discontented; every increase in material prosperity being accompanied by a corresponding increase in its aspirations towards national independence.

For such a country there can be no hope, not, at least, in the near future. The "*enrichissez-vous*" maxim of the bourgeois king has in this case no signification.

On arriving at Dantzic Mr. White had a dreary prospect before him. He had obtained a notable increase of salary, from £200 a year to £600, with office allowances. But the post had no sort of interest for him and he was no longer brought into official relations with English political leaders as had happened to him on several occasions when he was Vice-Consul at Warsaw.

The Foreign Secretary would not want to consult him

about the trade of Dantzic or the navigation of the Vistula ; that thoroughly Polish river, from whose banks at a higher point of the stream he had seen the inhabitants of Warsaw gazing in feverish expectation of the arrival of an English fleet !

Once when the Prince of Wales was returning through Dantzic from a visit to St. Petersburg Mr. White had the honour of receiving His Royal Highness at the railway station. Dantzic, however, though highly interesting by its ancient buildings and its historical associations, does not lie on any of the great travelling routes ; and no one came to see the new Consul at his new post.

He soon arranged, however, to make visits on his own account to Berlin where England was now represented by the Ambassador, who had carried on with Mr. White such a long and interesting correspondence on the subject of Polish affairs. These continued to interest Lord Napier, even after the Polish insurrection had been brought to an end ; and when he had been for some little time at Berlin, strange news reached him on the subject of Polish convents and the measures taken by the Russian Government for suppressing them. Mr. White, if any one, would know what it all meant, and, still at Warsaw, he received from Lord Napier the following letter on the subject :

" BERLIN,  
" Dec. 1, 1864.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I will send you a man early next week, and I will advise you of his approach by telegraph. It will be very interesting to me to hear your account of the measures concerning the suppression of the convents. I am myself not a great friend of monks, but placing myself in a Roman Catholic point of view, and assuming

that the religious bodies are virtuous, laborious, and enlightened, I conceive that a *number of small convents* disseminated over the surface of a barbarous country might be more useful as instruments of education and charity than a *few large convents* placed in cities. Whether the small convents were really pious or useful institutions in Poland is more than I can judge. I am also curious to know whether the lands and revenue of the suppressed convents are really honestly appropriated to the other wants of the Roman Catholic Church, or, at least, of the Roman Catholic people for spiritual purposes, and not disposed in favour of the peasants *temporally*, or in favour of orthodox proselytism. I am assured that the first is the case. I was very glad to learn that you had succeeded in obtaining a remove, and to the place which you desired. It will give me great pleasure to see you *en passant*. I saw the article in Katkoff's journal, and was pleased by it, for my address at St. Petersburg did not satisfy all my Russian friends. But I don't wish to be praised by a Russian journal at Warsaw.

"Believe me

"very truly yours,

"NAPIER."

For his report on the trade of Germany, previously referred to, Mr. White received an expression of thanks from Mr. Hammond, permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office.

Mr. White wished next to show what he knew of the Slav countries in Austria, Hungary, and the Balkan Peninsula; and he prepared an elaborate report on the subject, which drew from the Foreign Office not a request that he would kindly restrict his observations to the affairs of his own Consulate, but a cordial letter of acknowledgment and thanks.

Among the letters addressed to Mr. White by Mr. Hammond during the first years of his residence at Dantzic, the following may be given :

" F. O.,  
" December 28, '65.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I have to thank you for your letter of the 20th, which I have shown to Lord Clarendon, who desires me to beg you to write to me in the same way whenever you have any information to give.

" Very faithfully yours,

" G. HAMMOND."

Not long afterwards Mr. Hammond again wrote :

" I have to thank you for your letter of the 17th March, and the papers you were so good as to enclose with it. The long one was very interesting.

" As regards the fortress what I said, was 'that Darmstadt was territorial sovereign over one of the most important fortresses on the Rhine now occupied by a Prussian garrison.' One reporter forgot Mayence and concluded for Dantzic."

Mr. White must have reflected with bitterness that he was living and working in a place so entirely beyond the ken of newspaper reporters that one of them imagined it to be a fortified place on the Rhine, with Darmstadt for its territorial sovereign !

On June 1, 1870, close upon the eventful time when Mr. Hammond was to make his celebrated declaration as to the absolute peacefulness of the outlook in Europe, Mr. White had just sent in a paper on men and things in Austria, which drew from the permanent Under-Secretary the following reply :

" I have laid before Lord Clarendon the memorandum on Austrian affairs which you sent me on the 23rd, and he desires me to thank you for it, and to say he has read it with interest,

" Very faithfully yours,

" G. HAMMOND."

Towards the end of November, 1870, Mr. White seems to have been occupying himself with military matters, as who did not in that *annus mirabilis* of battles and sieges, victories and defeats? He had many friends in the Prussian Army, and one in particular of great eminence, Colonel (now General) Verdy du Vernois, whom he had known at Warsaw, and who occasionally wrote to him from the King's Headquarters.

Lord Granville was now Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Hammond had just shown him one of Mr. White's letters.

"He will be very glad," wrote Mr. Hammond, "that you should continue to write to me on the same or any other matters of interest that may come to your knowledge; for information from outsiders is very often valuable, and even more to be relied upon than that from headquarters."

By the beginning of 1871 the Consul at Dantzic had so far convinced the Foreign Office of his political ability and of his knowledge of the affairs of Eastern Europe, that we find him commissioned to undertake a journey through Hungary.

"My dear Sir," wrote Mr. Hammond, March 8, 1871, "I do not think that any particular instructions are needed by you during your approaching visit to Hungary. You will, of course, pick up all the information you can both of a commercial and a political nature, taking care, however, not to give your inquiries an official character.

"We should, of course, like to know anything you can glean respecting the relations between Austria and Russia, and the feelings of the Hungarians on the subject; and further, as to aims in regard to the Turkish Danubian Provinces.

"You will when at Vienna put Lord Bloomfield in possession of all the information that you have succeeded

in obtaining, and I will write to him to prepare him for your appearance.

In a letter of this period to Mr. Morier about church matters in Bavaria, Mr. White writes :

"Have you any notion or could you find out what relations exist between Bishop Reinkens and the Munich Old Catholics and the Uniate<sup>1</sup> Bishops in Turkey? I have reason to suspect that there are plans at work there which may in the future assume political significance."

The possible effect of the coming together of the Old Catholics in Bavaria, and the Uniate Bishops in Turkey, was a problem in political chemistry, which it would have been interesting to see worked out by the two diplomatic experts. Bishop Reinkens and the Uniate Bishops equally believed in national churches and service in the national tongue.

Mr. White was much interested just then in the work and personality of Bishop Strossmayer, to whom, in a letter written ten years later, Mr. Gladstone makes special reference when thanking Mr. White for a letter congratulating him on the fiftieth anniversary of his entry into political life.

"My dear Mr. White," wrote Mr. Gladstone, December 13, 1882, "the receipt of your very kind letter on this noteworthy day in my political career has given me much pleasure, and I thank you sincerely for remembering me and for sending me such cordial good wishes, which, I assure you, I much value. I have also had the honour of a most kind letter from Bishop Strossmayer, whom I admire and greatly revere.

"I remain,

"Very faithfully yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

<sup>1</sup> Græci Uniati, called in English by some writers "Greek Uniates," by others (perhaps more correctly), "United Greeks." Members of that Western Section of the Greek Church which accepted, at the

In August, 1872, Mr. Hammond wrote to Mr. White, thanking him for two letters that had recently come to hand.

"It is easy to understand," he continued, "how the Imperial meeting gives rise to all sorts of speculations. But I do not imagine that it will be productive of any other results than an interchange of present ideas, to be exchanged for others according to the ever-varying phases of European politics. The Church Question is much more likely to cause convulsion and trouble, and its growing up will at all events be curious to watch, especially at a time when in the natural course of things there may soon be a change in the Papacy."

On resigning his post, in 1873, Mr. Hammond wrote to thank Mr. White for a friendly and complimentary letter just received from him.

"I have always been careful," he added, "to let the Secretary of State see your letters to me, so that he might fully appreciate the interest and value of the information they contained. Now that I have retired from office, my successor, Lord Tenterden, will value your letters as I did, and you should communicate with him as with me."

Lord Tenterden, however, seems to have been a less active correspondent than Mr. Hammond, his predecessor; or, possibly, Mr. White had, for the moment, nothing more to write concerning German, Austrian, or Hungarian affairs. He was using all his influence to get appointed to some post in the East, where consuls are less commercial than political agents; and his first letter from Lord Tenterden instructs him (apparently in answer to Mr. White's inquiries on the subject) in the difficult art

Council of Florence, union with Rome, acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope and the double procession of the Holy Ghost, while retaining prayers in the vernacular and a married priesthood.

of drawing bills of exchange. It is addressed to him at Belgrade, where he had just arrived in the character of Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent.

"There is no mystery," writes Lord Tenterden, "about drawing the bills, and there are no printed forms. You merely draw the bill on Secretary of State for Foreign affairs at thirty days' sight, and write to me a separate despatch advising your having done so."

From soon after the Franco-German War until he left Dantzic for Belgrade, one of Mr. White's best friends at Berlin was the new Ambassador, Lord Odo Russell, afterwards Lord Ampthill.

Towards the end of the war this diplomatist had gone to the Royal Headquarters at Versailles to make representations to Count Bismarck in reference to Russia's declared intention of disregarding the article in the Treaty of Paris, which prevented her (equally with Turkey) from building warships on the Black Sea. Prince Gortchakoff, when the end of the Franco-German War could already be foreseen, and when the helpless position of our Crimean ally was only too obvious, insisted on the abolition of all restrictions as against Russian warships; and this abrupt violation of a solemn compact neither Mr. Gladstone nor Lord Granville could tolerate.

Mr. Odo Russell was commissioned, therefore, to explain to Count Bismarck, with whose knowledge and assent this step against England had been taken, that if Russia persisted in her declaration the consequence would be war.

This prospect Count Bismarck was too great a lover of peace to view without dismay; and in the end the English Government, far from supporting the representations of its agent at Versailles, listened to the Prussian statesman in his newly assumed character of peacemaker, and consented to enter a conference at which, instead of



objecting any longer to Russia's pretensions in regard to the building of warships on the Black Sea, she acceded to them in writing.

Count Bismarck said on this occasion that Russia would have acted more ingeniously had she begun building her new warships on the Black Sea, without saying anything about it. But Gortchakoff desired a great diplomatic triumph for himself, and at the same time an historical triumph for his country. He had been present in 1856 at the Paris Conference, and had made a point of not appending his signature to the Treaty; for he had sworn to make it the object of his life to undo in that treaty the two clauses which told specially against Russia. One of them was the clause forbidding Russia to build warships on the Black Sea—annulled in 1871 by the Conference of London; the other, the clause which took from her the strip of Bessarabia, on the Black Sea, annexed by the Treaty of Paris to Moldavia. This last was to be effaced in 1878, after the Russo-Turkish War, by the treaty of Berlin.

Although the English Government gave up the clause which Russia at a most favourable opportunity had denounced, it should in justice to Lord Granville be remembered that he made the best of a bad business. In dealing at the Conference with the question of the Straits he procured the affirmation of the principle that while Russia could introduce no warships from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea, Turkey was at liberty to take in as many as she pleased. Thus with sufficient energy and enterprise Turkey might within a short time have purchased and introduced into the Black Sea a far larger number of warships than Russia during the same period could possibly have built. Needless to add that Turkey did not profit by the opportunity.

Although Mr. Odo Russell did not succeed—was not allowed to succeed—in his diplomatic mission to Count Bismarck at Versailles, he made an excellent impression on the great statesman, and the Government saw that he would for that and other reasons be the best possible man to send, after the conclusion of peace, as Ambassador to Berlin.

Mr. White had now his eye fixed on Belgrade, where the Consulate was not yet vacant, but might soon become so. He had still three years to wait; but the time seemed already to have arrived for laying siege to the old fortress. He had resolved to occupy the place, and had consulted about the matter Lord Odo Russell, Sir Robert Morier, and Lord Granville.

Two months later Lord Odo Russell's uncle, Earl Russell, was to attain his eightieth birthday, and Mr. White addressed to him on that occasion the following congratulatory letter:

“BRITISH CONSULATE, DANTZIC.

“15 August, 1872.

“MY LORD,

“Next Sunday I believe your Lordship will celebrate your eightieth birthday, and I hope you will kindly excuse the liberty I take of transmitting my sincere congratulations on so happy a day.

“It has been your good fortune to attach your name to a long succession of constitutional enactments which stand out as landmarks of political progress in this century, and to see realised in your lifetime many changes at home and on the continent of Europe highly favourable to the development of civil and religious liberty. You have an opportunity of looking back with pride on a life so well spent, and during which you have contributed so successfully to the public good, and to the fulfilment of the aspirations of your early years.

“Personally, I owe your Lordship the deepest gratitude for the kind and generous manner in which you have treated me as my Chief; and as I cannot unfortunately

make my appearance at the Lodge on Sunday next in the circle of your devoted friends and admirers, I am desirous of paying you and Lady Russell my respects on that memorable day at least in writing.

"For whatever good I have enjoyed here, I am indebted principally to your kindness, and I remain, dear Lord Russell, wishing you many happy returns,

"Yours ever gratefully and most faithfully,

"W. A. WHITE.

"THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL RUSSELL, K.G., &c., &c."

To the above letter Lord Russell replied four days afterwards in the following terms :

"PEMBROKE LODGE, RICHMOND PARK.

"Aug. 19, 1872.

"DEAR MR. WHITE,

"I thank you most heartily for your congratulations on my eightieth birthday. Thank God, I am quite well ; but at my age life is very uncertain, and a little shake may break the machine to pieces. Thank God, too, I have been allowed to carry measures aiming at the liberty and prosperity of the nation.

"The Whigs were the guardians of the public liberties while the nation was in a pupil state. It has now attained its majority, and must take care of its own liberties against a Cæsar or a Catiline,

"Ever yours truly,

"RUSSELL."

Lord Odo found himself frequently called upon to consult Mr. White on commercial questions ; and in one letter he informs Mr. White that, though he requires no consul at Berlin, he has been instructed by Lord Granville to offer the post of Consul-General to "Mr. Bleichröder" who, he adds, "has graciously accepted the unpaid office."

The Bleichröder referred to was the well-known banker formerly of Frankfort, where he enjoyed the friendship of

Bismarck, then the representative of Prussia at the headquarters of the Germanic confederation.

Herr Bleichröder rendered an important service to Germany and a dis-service to France when, in 1871, Bismarck summoned him to Versailles in order to consult him on the subject of the war indemnity. The keen-eyed financier saw at a glance that the diplomatists who had drawn up the treaty had committed an error of considerable importance; for, in imposing an indemnity payable by instalments, they had forgotten to charge interest on the balance remaining after each instalment had been paid.

Bismarck thanked him heartily and promised to recommend him to the notice of the newly created Emperor. It had occurred to the Prussian Minister that his friend, the banker, would like nothing so much as to place a "Von" before his name, and he therefore begged His Imperial Majesty to admit him into the ranks of the nobility. In making the application Count Bismarck pointed out to his sovereign that the postulant, though the bearer of no title, was a man of ancient birth; "for your Majesty," he said, "has only to look into his face to see that he is a lineal descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Thereupon Herr Bleichröder, an excellent man and a devoted friend of Bismarck's, was duly ennobled.

Some weeks later, after his return to Berlin, Herr Von Bleichröder determined to give a party, when not possessing numerous acquaintances among the higher society of the Prussian capital, he begged an acquaintance, who "knew every one," to draw him up a list of guests; which the influential and highly connected friend obligingly did.

"But we can't have this man," said Herr Von

Bleichröder when he came to the name of a gentleman of distinction which had, nevertheless, no "Von" before it. "We can't ask him. He doesn't belong to the nobility!"

These anecdotes belong in a way to the present biography, for it was from Sir William White that I heard them.

In answer to a most friendly letter from Mr. Morier, Mr. White wrote, July, 1874, as follows:

"Just a few lines to acknowledge your ever-memorable epistle of the 23rd. I have destroyed it, as desired, but its contents shall remain engraved on my memory as long as I retain that valuable action of my brain.

"I have had a sort of *ahnung* that something of the kind was going on; but you can imagine what an anxiety the perusal of the first part of your letter produced in me. I really do not know what to say as regards the step you have taken on my behalf. I cannot attempt to thank you, for any expression of gratefulness on my part would be still wholly inadequate. Your action in this matter was an intervention of the most kind and rare species of benevolence.

"I had been bracing myself up for a great disappointment; and I shall continue to keep my moral condition at a point at which it may bear any disappointment in store for me. My motto is, *Nil desperandum*. But you were perfectly right and justified in asserting as you did that a failure now would be tantamount to a breaking of backbone as far as my official life is concerned.

"The F. O.," he afterwards writes, "are not in the habit of leaving such a post unoccupied; it is therefore highly probable that it has been offered to my rival, whoever that may be. I should not be surprised to hear that it is one of the Oriental Secretaries at Constantinople.

"Somehow or other there are many people—even in office—who jump at the most superficial conclusion that a knowledge of Turkey and of Semitic languages is a qualification for a post on the Lower Danube, whether Bucharest or Belgrade. What a fatal delusion! Longworth and Green both owed their appointment to this deceptive view of the requirements of these two posts.

"How sad for me to think that all my efforts—nay,

more, that the kind, affectionate, generous and powerful arguments of two such friends as yourself and Lord Odo, two giants of our diplomatic service—*gigantes magni*—should fail in setting the matter straight !”

On February 16, 1875, Lord Odo Russell wrote to ask Mr. White, among other things if he knew what impression “those remarkable letters on Prussia and the Vatican” had made in England. “Their cleverness and power strike me,” he added ; “but I cannot quite agree. Perhaps I do not know the subject so well as the author.”

I may here present a letter, a very lively one, from Sir Robert Morier, the author of those very papers on Prussia and the Vatican which Lord Odo Russell so much admired, without knowing at the time who had written them. They were published anonymously in *Macmillan's Magazine* (1874).

“My dear White,” wrote Morier, February 15, 1875, “What in the name of all the devils has made you say that you knew *from me* that I was the author of Vatican and Prussia and of the letters to Manning? Surely I impressed upon you over and over again the necessity of *absolute reticence* as regards the authorship. Do please be careful. It would be an immense mischief to me ; its coming out *authentically* that I am the author. I know many people *surmise* I am the author, but till one of my friends, like you, says he knows I am the author *and knows it from me*, surmises will remain surmises.

“The 13th is over, and you ought to know about yourself. Pray let me know *as soon as ever you know your fate for certain*. Why can't you answer my letter and tell me all the news?

“Try and put people on some other scent as regards the authorship. You could say you knew for certain it was Countess Leyden, or Malet, or, much better (now I come to think of it), *Cartwright*, who, I *really* believe, did write them.

“Yours very sincerely,

“R. B. MORIER.”

The letter in which Morier informed his friend that he was writing a series of papers on the relations between Church and State in Germany is dated "Munich, February 21, 1873," and contains no caution as to keeping silence in regard to the authorship. Here is the letter :

"BRITISH LEGATION, MUNICH,  
"21 Feb., 1873.

"DEAR WHITE,

"I am truly ashamed of myself for having shown myself in one of my worst fits of *graphophobia* (I invented the word to christen a disease from which I suffer beyond most men) to a man who probably was not aware of my constitutional infirmity, and was therefore *dans son droit* if he declared me outside the pale of epistolary law. I received your letter and books all right. Then came your telegram which I answered ; thereby obtaining a momentary rest for my conscience ; and then—and then—I didn't write ! And now comes your second letter, heaping coals of fire on my unprotected head. I much wished, when I telegraphed to you, to add : 'Come on here, and I will put you up' ; but it was impossible as we had only just got into our house and had only one table and two chairs and one room for everything. I like Munich very well—principally because I have found a charming house *outside* of it. There are many subjects of interest, and I cultivate much the great Döllinger, who is personally the most delightful of *gelehrte*. Socially I cannot say much for the place. It is very *petite ville*, and a large *petite ville* is even in some respects worse than a small one.

"I am preparing a set of papers on the conflict between Church and State in the new Empire, treated *historically* and *anhängend* on the movements (Josephinismus, Zebronianismus, Collegialismus, Territorinismus, etc.), which immediately preceded the break up of the Empire, as well as the absence of movement which characterised the period between 1815—1848 and thence to now ! You will wonder at my courage, or, more properly speaking, audacity. But one must do something.

"I am inclined to lay much weight on what Wetherell writes to you. He is more careful than any one I ever yet

met with, never to say more than about 75 per cent. *less* than what he means, and would never say a thing of this kind unless there was a good nucleus at the bottom. Moreover, I convinced myself in England that you were appreciated *as you ought to be* in the right quarters.

"In haste,

"Yours very truly,

"R. B. MORIER."

The letters at this period addressed to Mr. White by our minister at Munich bear but little on current politics. But everything that Morier wrote was lively, clever, and thoughtful; and among all the letters of his that are to be found in the plentiful collection left by Sir William White, there is not one that is uninteresting or dull. Here are a couple taken almost at random.

"28 February, 1875.

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"You can do me a great service, and may be sure that I shall be ready to return the like *en tems et lieu*. I want you at your club (*Athenæum*, is it not?) to look up a file of the *Times* for 1873 and to find me the passage respecting Mr. Gordon's marriage to Mlle. de Beulwitz—*i.e.*, the marriage of the late envoy at Stuttgart to a lady with a wooden leg. I have the passage *en long et en large* on a slip which I cut out at the time, and therefore I do not want the passage, but I want the date and number of the *Times* in which the article occurs. It was, I am almost certain, in the month of June, but possibly it might have been end of May or beginning of July. It is headed *Act of Declaration of Marriage*, and was, I think, at the bottom of a left hand column.

"I wish you would write me a gossiping letter. Your last was a very meagre performance. It seems to me too absurd their not telling you about Belgrade, as I don't mind telling you now (though you must never say I told you) that it has all been settled since I wrote to you in August!!

"Yours ever,

"R. B. MORIER"



"MUNICH,"  
 "29/12/75.

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I have been long exercised in my mind as to the way I could repay you the £1 you were so good as to spend in grubbing up that *Times* notice of the Gordon marriage. The new Imperial money has come in just *à propos*, as 20 marks are as nearly as possible £1, and four 5-mark notes are very handy things to travel with. Let me know when you think of running to Vienna that we may combine a meeting there. I very much want to see you and have a great Oriental talk. I hear you have written a splendid general report on *Slavs and Slavism*. Mind you bring it with you if you run up to Vienna. I shall be curious to see what the coming year will bring forth politically: not a bed of roses, I expect. I wish I could feel as sure that the last state of the Suez Canal purchase will be as brilliant as the first was to the imagination, at least, of poor old Philister Johannes de Bove, or, rather, de Tauro, who would so like to feel himself once more a fine fellow, and who cannot, with the best will in the world, get any of his successive drovers to put him in the way of doing so. I have very little faith in the present set. If Dizzi was 20 years younger he might perhaps have had backbone enough to make something at least original out of his Suez shares, but he is stiff in the joints, and the others. . . . (Carnarvon at the Colonies always excepted, for he has *le courage de son opinion*). . . . Well, we'll see.

"My essay on Local Government has been very much appreciated in Germany (the old story of the prophet in and out of his own country), but the result has been a disastrous one for me. Holtzendorf thought it so good he insisted on having it translated into German, and he launched this translation with a flaming preface of his own. But alas! he trusted the translator, and never took the precaution of reading the product.

"I knew nothing of the matter; because though I had in a general way told Holtzendorf that I would sanction any translation he made himself responsible for, I never knew that the matter had been really taken in hand. When the work was out and had already been very favourably reviewed (among others by Bismarck's *Leibrechtel*, the M.D.A.), I got a copy, and, on reading it, found the

most ghastly bit of work that was ever revealed to the eyes of an unfortunate author. Not *one* page without the gravest misunderstandings, not a remote conception of the subject, not one technical term but was ingeniously mistranslated; in a word poor me exhibited as a complete and total fool to a German scientific public. There was nothing to do but to buy up the edition, and bring out another one *corrected*—i.e., re-written by the author. This has been the *Christ-kind* with which the Fates have *bescheert* me; and a blessed time I have had of it!

"Now, with all manner of good wishes for the new year, believe me,

"Ever yours,  
"R. B. MORIER."

About this time, when he had left Dantzic and was on the point of starting for Belgrade, Mr. White received from Mr. Morier a letter asking him, on behalf of Mr. John Morley, to write an article for the *Fortnightly Review* on Bosnia and the Herzegovina; where disturbances, first arising from troubles with tax-gatherers, were gradually assuming the form of an insurrection.

"I don't wonder," began Morier, "that in your last letter you take to cussin' and swearin' and threatenin'. In the matter of writing I am given to procrastination, but this time it must have appeared beyond the reach even of 'was *ich* bester kann' in that line. However, it is all accountable for, and in a very disagreeable way too. 1st, I did not answer your No. 1 to Dantzic because for some reason or other the date of the letter and of its reception did not fit, and I reckoned you would have left before my letter would reach you. I did not write to Belgrade because I did not know when you would get there, as I heard you were going round by Northern China. Then, when your two letters came shortly on each other to Munich, where one is ordered not to write letters (but I meant to indemnify you by a great letter on my return)—then it was that all my miseries began. Two or three days after my arrival at Munich from Wildbad I was bowled over with a violent gastric attack just short

of gastric fever. Though it only lasted a few days, I was for four weeks absolutely prostrate; morally, intellectually, and physically mere pulp. I could hardly crawl from my bedroom to the drawing-room, and had to be carried downstairs. Then on the top I got a gout attack, which keeps me again four weeks in bed; and then intermittent fever. A week ago only I was able to be moved here, where I am beginning to pick up, having walked 100 yards this morning with comparative impunity. You will now, I hope, understand my not writing, and also the impossibility we have been in to show any civility to Mrs. White. From the 1st of July till last Monday I have been either in bed or on the sofa, and Mrs. Morier has been a sick-nurse.

"And now for business. I had a letter from John Morley—as you know, the editor of the *Fortnightly*—asking me for an article on the Herzegovina and present South Slav movement. I answered that I had travelled over all that country twenty years ago but knew nothing of it now, but there was one man in the world who could write such an article, and that was you. I had a letter by return of post begging me to write to you to ask if you would do it, and (to save time) begging you would write directly to him (John Morley, Esq., 193, Piccadilly), saying whether you would or would not write the article or articles in question. In proposing to me to write, he said that though it was an almost invariable rule to publish the author's name, he would be ready to print my articles anonymously. I have no doubt he would do the same by you. You must of course be the best judge as to whether or not it is desirable you should write on these matters just now, *even anonymously* (knowing how difficult it is to remain anonymous), and I consider that under no circumstances you should write in any sense what would set F. O.s teeth on edge. But without going too much into politics, I think an objective, historical, and statistical sketch just now might be made, which, while remaining quite *safe*, might be very interesting. At all events, I did not wish you to miss the chance of making a £10 note (an article I find always acceptable), to say nothing of a connection with the *Fortnightly* which may bring in many more. I doubt whether you could master the subject in one article (as they must be kept very short), and whether less than two or three would suffice. But

under all circumstances write at once to Morley telling him Yes or No.

"Yours ever truly,  
"R. B. MORIER."

The article was never written. Sir William White told me of the proposition that had been made to him, adding that he could not possibly take advantage of it. In the first place he was not accustomed to write for the Press as Morier was, and he felt nervous about it.

I expressed some astonishment at this, seeing how fluently and forcibly he made speeches, not only in English, but also in French, German, and Polish.

The spoken word vanished, he said, but the written word remained. Even if the speech was reported the speaker was not answerable for the report. The reporter might have made a mistake—like the reporter of Mr. Hammond's speech, who made him say that Dantzic was a federal fortress on the Rhine under the territorial jurisdiction of Hesse-Darmstadt. But apart altogether from the difficulty of the matter, it would be imprudent to write about a burning question so closely affecting the country to which he was now accredited. Sooner or later the authorship would be found out, and "they" didn't like their agents and envoys to be writing in the Press. Anything that was worth writing should, according to "them," be written for the Foreign Office, and for "them" exclusively.

There is much to be said for the Foreign Office view; and Sir William White was undoubtedly wise in conforming to it. He may have missed the pleasure of influencing in a direct and visible manner the public mind; may have missed also a few ten-pound notes. But the reports he was constantly addressing to the Foreign Office from his post at Dantzic on Church matters in Germany, on

the relations between Germany and Austria, between Austria and Hungary, between Hungary and its Slavonic provinces, and on the Slavonic provinces of Turkey, must have strengthened his claims for promotion, which the publication of these reports in the form of newspaper or magazine articles would have weakened and perhaps destroyed.

Sir William White's political reports from Dantzic as distinguished from his commercial ones were unofficial and did not find their way into Blue Books. Nor probably did his best from Belgrade, Bucharest, and Constantinople.

Those better suited to the public eye were, before being printed, sent to him, according to custom, for revision ; and during the years 1876 and 1877 the letters he received from the Foreign Office seem to have referred almost exclusively to the preparation of his reports for publication.

One official wrote to him saying :

"We send you your despatches to revise as you wish. We have not given many of them for fear of compromising you and making it hot for you at Belgrade."

"Please go carefully through your despatches," wrote another, "and say what additions or further omissions you propose." And again : "Please telegraph as soon as possible any observations, corrections, and omissions you wish to have made."

Without such precautions the publication of diplomatic documents would of course be impossible. It was in reference to this necessary work of revision that Prince Bismarck, asked one day in the Chamber why Prussia did not, like England, publish despatches from her ambassadors and envoys abroad, made the following reply :

"Because, to do so, it would be necessary to double the number of the clerks in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

## CHAPTER V

### ARRIVAL IN SERVIA

**M**R. WHITE owed his first opportunity of distinguishing himself to the Polish Insurrection of 1863; and on arriving at Belgrade in September, 1875, he again found himself in the midst of armed risings, some in actual existence, others in course of preparation.

At last he had attained the object, or, at least, the first object of his great desire: to play an active part in Eastern affairs. He had for several years been endeavouring to get promotion in the direction of the Lower Danube; and the letters of his correspondents in the diplomatic service, from 1871 onward, are full of references to this earnest wish of his.

The Eastern Question, seldom slumbering for very long, had begun to reassert itself in 1874; when the wretched condition of the peasantry in Bosnia—Christian labourers and farmers under Mahometan landowners—was the starting-point. An agrarian movement had broken out nearly twenty years before, in 1857, when there was a rising at once against the tax-gatherers of the Turkish Government, and the rent-gatherers of the local proprietors. After being defeated in an engagement with Turkish troops, the insurgents crossed the frontier into Austria, returning, however, to their homes on the proclamation of an amnesty.

In 1867 troubles of the same character took place in

Bosnia, where at that time the peasantry were the most disaffected, because perhaps the most destitute, of all the peasant populations in the Christian provinces of Turkey. Not that in Bosnia the Christians formed a strong element as in the other Slavonic lands of the Balkan Peninsula; for here the Slavonian landed proprietors had at the time of the conquest accepted Mahometanism in order to save their estates. According to some statistical tables the population in 1875 was about half Christian, half Mahometan, while others gave nine hundred thousand Christians to five hundred thousand Mahometans.

Bosnia, the Herzegovina, and Montenegro being all profoundly agitated the excitement could not but spread to Serbia; and already a certain number of Servian volunteers had taken up arms, and hurried across the frontier in aid of the Bosnian Insurgents. The formation of additional bands was prevented by the Servian Government; and Prince Milan conveyed the assurance of his pacific intentions both to the Porte and to the guaranteeing Powers.

But the insurgents in Bosnia appealed to the Servians for assistance, and the prayer of the petitioners was accepted and supported by the Servian assembly. The Prince, however, to the injury of his own popularity, remained deaf to all entreaties. He nevertheless despatched a former Servian Minister, Mr. Christitch, to Montenegro with a view to an understanding between the two principalities as to what course they should pursue towards the insurgents, towards the Porte, and towards the guaranteeing Powers.

The decision they at last came to was, that if all representations on the part of the great Powers should fail, they would themselves address the Porte, and

recommend the pacification of the insurgent provinces by means of an autonomic administration, entrusted for Bosnia to Prince Milan of Servia, and for the Herzegovina to Prince Nicholas of Montenegro.

This, in spite of the terms employed, was a demand for the cession of the Herzegovina to Montenegro, and of Bosnia to Servia; and Mr. Christitch, sent as Servian agent to the Turkish capital, was assured, that if the Prince's envoy had come to propose the extension of the Servian administration to Bosnia, he would not be received. Rebuffed in this manner, Mr. Christitch made a last attempt, and submitted to the Divan in writing the proposition he had been charged to lay before it.

The Grand Vizier refused to receive it; and this was the immediate cause of the Servo-Turkish War.

Servia took up arms as the advanced guard of Russia. The advanced guard of Servia was, before long, to be composed of Russian volunteers; and when Russians and Servians had both been defeated by the Turks, Russia herself was to appear on the scene.

This difficult situation was to manifest itself soon after Mr. White's arrival at Belgrade. He had now once more to do with Russians; for when Servia had openly taken the part of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Insurgents against the Sultan, whole companies and battalions of Russian volunteers flocked to the Servian capital.

At Warsaw Mr. White had known the Russians as oppressors. Here they arrived in the character of liberators. Like the insurgents in Poland, these Russian volunteers were of various kinds and actuated by various motives; and even as the mainspring of action in Poland had been patriotism, so with the Russians in Servia, it was patriotism of a kind; a desire to carry out Russian views, at once imperial and national, together with love of



adventure, and hope of promotion. For the officers (who formed, however, but a small proportion of the volunteers) had left the Russian Army with the certainty that they would be able to rejoin it when their self-assumed mission in Servia had come to an end.

The Emperor, Alexander II., in a conversation on the subject with Lord Augustus Loftus at St. Petersburg, told him that Russian officers had been allowed to go as volunteers to Servia, "in order to throw cold water" on the excitement. The inevitable effect, however, was to increase the excitement. Now that some thousands of Russian volunteers were taking part in the unequal struggle carried on by a small and, of itself, helpless Slavonian State, against the Ottoman Empire, all Russia was interested in the success of the Servians.

There seemed, however, but small chance of the Bosnian troubles leading to a Servo-Turkish War, when, in the autumn of 1875, Mr. White came to Belgrade; and, apart from the condition of Bosnia, where the action of insurgent bands was gradually affecting the neighbouring principality, he had to occupy himself in the first place with the condition of the Jews in Servia. To this the attention of Mr. White's predecessors had been directed for many years past; whenever, indeed, no matter of political importance was on hand. An article of the Servian constitution declared all the inhabitants of Servia to be equal before the law, "except Jews." Yet, strangely enough, all the highest offices in the state were open to Jews—those very Jews who were denied the most ordinary trading rights. So, by way of exemplifying the liberality of Servian political institutions, a Jew was put up for the Skuptchina and duly elected, in the midst of the negotiations that were being carried on with the

Western Powers on the subject of the general position of Jews in Servia.

"A Jew has been made a member of the Skuptchina!" cried the Servians. "Scarcely more than a quarter of a century has passed since the English Parliament refused to receive a Rothschild into its body after he had been elected again and again by his fellow citizens. We have done ourselves the honour to choose as a member of the Skuptchina a real live Jew. What more do you want?"

But the Western Powers wanted more still. They thought that besides taking part in the legislation of the country the Jews ought to enjoy the right, so dear to them, of buying and selling.

The representations made to the diplomatic agents in Servia and Roumania on the subject of Jewish disabilities came to them, of course, from the Foreign Office; while the Foreign Office acted on communications received from various Jewish societies. Examples no doubt of injustice and ill-treatment were often correctly cited. But it is equally certain that some of the alleged cases of persecution were pure inventions. A picture, for instance, was published in a French pictorial paper (*Le Monde Illustré*) of a *razzia* said to have been executed upon the Jews at Jassy, the chief town of Moldavia, of which no one at Jassy had ever heard; while at a later period a Jewish Member of Parliament, Sir John Simon, made the fantastic declaration in the House of Commons that "every atrocity committed in Bulgaria upon Christians had been perpetrated in Roumania upon Jews."

Attempts to introduce into a country, through the pressure of foreign powers, legislative changes which the Government of that country is unwilling to accept can scarcely be attended with success. Interference with

Russia in regard to the affairs of Poland was bitterly resented in 1863, as in 1830; and nothing in either case came of it but increased activity towards bringing the insurrection to an end; an activity which, if the intervening powers had been in earnest, and the Power intervened against weak, might easily have degenerated into something worse.

To give some idea of the persistency with which the Israelitish Alliance carried on its species of crusade against Christians accused of persecution, it may be mentioned, that when in 1874, just before Mr. White's arrival at Belgrade, Prince Charles of Roumania paid a visit to Queen Victoria at Windsor, Sir Francis Goldsmid lost no time in asking Lord Derby to bring His Highness to book on the subject of the Jews in Roumania; "who must be better treated," said Sir Francis, "if Roumania is to be looked upon as a civilised power." Lord Derby, however, excused himself from carrying out Sir Francis Goldsmid's request.

The Ambassador of England at Constantinople was in like manner importuned to make representations to the Prince of Servia in favour of the Jews, when His Highness was on a visit to the Sultan.

Apart from other objections, neither of the two Princes to whom the Israelitish Alliance wished to appeal could personally have done the least thing towards changing his country's laws in regard to the Jews. If, as their co-religionaries in other countries alleged, the Jews were ill-treated in Servia and Roumania, why, asked Servians and Roumanians, did they flock to these countries in such large numbers from Galicia, the Kingdom of Poland, and Russia? They met with no encouragement, they were not invited, they were turned back from the frontier when their passports were not in order; and if, as often

happened, they eluded the vigilance of the frontier guard and without passports and also without the means of subsistence wandered into Roumania, then they were arrested as soon as possible and sent across the border towards the country from whence they had come. In these last cases it was not because they were Jews that they were so inhospitably received, but because they were vagabonds; Christian vagabonds being treated in precisely the same manner. As to refusing to admit destitute foreigners, was not this done by other governments—as by the government, of the United States and of our own Australian Colonies?

Not content with working through its own agents, the Foreign Office once went so far as to instruct Lord Augustus Loftus at Berlin to call the attention of Prince Bismarck to the disabilities weighing upon the Jews in Servia.

Sir Andrew Buchanan at St. Petersburg was directed in like manner to bring the matter to the notice of Prince Gortchakoff, who, hearing (apparently for the first time) of the unfortunate position of the Jews in Servia, replied that he would cause inquiries to be made. He promised, also, to write to General Ignatieff, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople. But, according to his own personal belief (he added), the restrictions of which the Jews in Servia complained were more to be attributed “to a desire to prevent the practices by which Jewish usurers and dealers in spirits exercised a demoralising effect on the peasantry than to any religious fanaticism.”

On another occasion, when addressed by Lord Augustus Loftus on the subject of the Jews in Servia and Roumania, Prince Gortchakoff protested that on the part of Russians no ill feeling whatever was entertained towards Jews; and he mentioned with grave humour that only the

week before Russian decorations had been given to two members of the Rothschild family !

No such activity on the part of our Foreign Office had ever been shown on behalf of the Eastern Christians as was now exhibited in favour of the Servian and Roumanian Jews. Not only were foreign governments attacked on the subject in their own capitals, but foreign ambassadors were similarly treated in London. Thus Lord Granville, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, had a long talk on the subject with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Count Beust ; his lordship complaining that juries in Servia and Roumania would not convict on the evidence of a Jew ; whereas a Jewish prisoner, whatever he might be accused of, was tolerably sure to be found guilty.

The Count replied that the only remedy for this was to abolish trial by jury. Lord Granville suggested that His Excellency probably meant abolition of the jury system in cases where Israelites were concerned ? The Ambassador, however, thought this might seem " invidious," and repeated his suggestion in its original form.

Lord Granville thereupon observed that Her Majesty's Government " would not be supported by public opinion in this country if it proposed the abolition of trial by jury in all criminal cases. . . . There were certain persons who thought it might be advisable in civil cases, but their opinion had not been adopted ; while as regarded criminal cases, even in Ireland, where it was often difficult to obtain convictions in very flagrant cases, Her Majesty's Government had not proposed any such measure."

This conversation between Lord Granville and Count Beust took place in July, 1872. Within ten years the Government, of which Lord Granville was a prominent

member, proposed and carried the Bill for the "suspension of trial by jury in Ireland," the jury being replaced by judges.

In the end neither Servia nor Roumania was called upon to abolish trial by jury—not even in cases where Jews were concerned.

Soon after Mr. White's arrival in Belgrade he received through the Foreign Office a copy of a letter from the Vice-President of the Anglo-Jewish Association on the subject of the reforms in favour of Christians, which it was hoped would soon be introduced into the Turkish Empire.

"As the time appears opportune," began the letter, "for remedying the serious grievances of the large Jewish population in the Turkish dominion, we, members of the council of the Anglo-Jewish Association, beg leave to address your lordship [Lord Derby] in reference to this important subject.

"We are especially induced to submit this matter to your lordship's kind consideration in consequence of the prevailing rumour that Her Majesty's Government intend to urge upon the Government of His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, the concession of such reforms as would remove the several disabilities under which the Christian subjects of the Porte are labouring. The council of the Anglo-Jewish Association would earnestly solicit your lordship at this juncture to bear in mind the claims of the Jewish inhabitants of the Turkish Empire, and would beg you to include the Jewish people in any representation that may be made to the Porte with regard to a removal of these laws, the operation of which presses upon all non-Mahometans, and in many instances with a special severity on the Jewish community."

Mr. White informed the Anglo-Jewish Association in reply that the Jewish population would benefit equally with the Christian by the removal of any disabilities under which the non-Mussulman population had hitherto laboured; and that although in most countries it had

been the custom to speak of the "Mahometan and Christian" populations, the terms employed by the Porte in its official documents were "Mussulmans and non-Mussulmans"; these terms being used in the new regulations issued by the Porte respecting the acquisition of land, "which would apply to Jews exactly in the same way as to Christians."

When not occupied with the condition of the Jews (whose demand, as defined by Sir Robert Morier, was "to have the rite of circumcision placed on an equality with the rite of baptism"), Mr. White had to devote his attention to all kinds of projects for the solution of the Eastern Question; the one which at that time found most favour with Servian politicians being the gradual replacement of European Turkey by three independent Christian states—Roumanian, Servo-Bulgarian, and Greek. There would, of course, be all kinds of difficulties in connection with the frontiers of the new states; which were to be decided according to some by ethnological, according to others by geographical considerations.

Nor were the various theorists agreed, either as to their geography or their ethnology. In a general way, however, the idea of three independent Christian States, with a military and political bond between them, was the favourite one of the moment; and it was afterwards adopted in a very practical manner by the diplomacy of the United States, which sent to these parts a very distinguished man, the late Eugene Schuyler (previously Consul at Moscow and afterwards Secretary of Legation at St. Petersburg), with instructions to reside in turn at Athens, Belgrade, and Bucharest. Among the claimants of the Turkish inheritance, Greece, Servia, and Roumania were, in addition to other recommendations, the only States that possessed each a university.

The future desired for the Balkan States by General Tchernaiëff, who was soon to appear on the scene as Commander of the Russian volunteers in Servia and of the Servian Army, was naturally of a different character. In conversation with a correspondent of the *Times* (October 31, 1876), he declared himself in favour of "independent Slavonic Principalities, forming a kind of loose confederation under Russian influence." One large Slavonic State south of the Danube he did not desire; at least, not an independent one.

Another part of General Tchernaiëff's scheme, put forward, as he frankly admitted, in order to gain the approval and support of England, was that the tributes payable to Turkey should be continued by the different States under their new constitution, and that these tributes should be used for payment of the interest on the Turkish loans, taken up, for the most part, by English subscribers.

It was a little late for the Russian General's financial proposal to be duly effective. Turkey already meditated repudiation, and at the beginning of October, 1876, it was officially announced that, for five years to come, she had resolved to pay only half her debt charges in cash; a proclamation which at once dissolved the whole fabric of Turkish credit.

In one of his private letters, written soon after his arrival at Belgrade, Mr. White calls attention to the fact that just as for the Poles there are two Polands—the so-called "congress kingdom" formed in 1815 at Vienna, and the ancient Poland partitioned at the end of the eighteenth century—so for the Servians there are two Servias:—Servia within its actual political limits, and the ancient Servia, which at one time included nearly the whole of the Balkan Peninsula.

The new Servia looked forward to by the "Youth"



society or "Omladina," corresponded nearly enough with the Serbia of the Middle Ages. This new Serbia, however, was, according to the views of the "Omladina," to be formed not merely on an historical, but on a positive ethnological basis. It was to be a State in which the majority of the population would belong to the same Servian or South Slavonic race, and would speak with but slight variations the same Servian language.

For between the various parts of ancient Serbia,—between the Serbia of the present day, Bosnia, the Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the whole of Austrian Croatia—what in the days of the Schleswig-Holstein Question used to be called a "nexus socialis," exists. It has been said, too, that the different lands had, and of course have still, a common literature—that literature of love-songs and heroic ballads which flourishes in all Slavonian countries. When a certain writer, bearing the un-euphonious name of "Wuk," who had the literary unity of Serbia much at heart, undertook for the first time the task of collecting Servian songs of every description, he found that they had their origin equally in Serbia, Bosnia, and Montenegro. "One of the rhapsodists brought to the court of Prince Milosch for the collector's benefit was," says a writer on this subject, "a woodcutter and robber from Serbia ; a very excellent and honest man for a robber. A second was a Bosnian brigand, old and covered with wounds, who would not recite until he had been made half drunk, and who, when he had once begun, could not be prevailed upon to stop. A third was a Montenegrin bandit who was in prison for killing a witch."

They were all Servians, however, by language, and by a common poetical and national sentiment ; and it is interesting to note that this fact was established without

political motive in the year 1820, when no one was dreaming of the "Omladina" or of the Servian revival.

The ambitious programme of the "Omladina" was rudely interfered with at the settlement of Berlin by the assignment of Bosnia and the Herzegovina to Austria, and by the erection of the Bulgarian country into a separate principality; while seven years after the Berlin Conference the Bulgaria and Servia, which were to have been bound together within the frontiers of one great Servian state, entered upon a war between themselves. So in regard to all Slavonian and Pan-Slavonian projects. Ethnical and linguistic arguments are worth nothing in opposition to political reasons and the *ultima ratio regum*.

The latest re-arrangement of the Balkan States (1901) includes two separate groups, with Roumania and Greece in one, and Servia and Bulgaria in the other; the latter a Slavonian, the former an anti-Slavonian, league.

Sir William White took particular interest not only in the politics, but in the legends and historical associations of Servia; and without entertaining any very vivid admiration for the Turks, was indignant when, during his residence at Belgrade, some ultra-patriotic, utterly barbarous Servians levelled to the earth the tomb of Kara Mustapha, the unfortunate Pasha who, in 1683, commanded the Turkish forces before Vienna.

The news of the defeat reached Constantinople long before Kara Mustapha, defending himself as he retired, arrived at Belgrade. He had scarcely entered the city when he was waited upon by an emissary from the Sultan. He at once understood the object of the visit. Asking for five minutes' grace, he knelt down on a piece of carpet, said his prayers, and then submitted his neck to the bow-string.

## CHAPTER VI

### SERVIA, IN 1876. BULGARIAN ATROCITIES

IT has been seen that at the time of Mr. White's arrival in Servia there were several favourite solutions of the Eastern Question in its application to the Balkan Peninsula. There were also two favourite explanations of the constant risings of Christian subjects against the Turkish Government. According to one view, the cause of the insurrections was Turkish oppression ; according to the other instigation on the part of native revolutionary committees backed up by Russia, and especially by the Slavonic societies of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

It is quite certain that when the Russians re-armed a large portion of their infantry in 1863, the discarded weapons were sent as a present to the Servians. General Tchernaiëff spoke to me personally of this "friendship's offering" on the part of Russia to her dependent Slavonic relatives as quite a natural thing, and of course saw nothing discreditable in it. Lord Palmerston, to whom the bills of lading had somehow been forwarded just after the despatch of the arms by train from St. Petersburg, took a different view of the matter and expressed it with much force in a letter to Baron Brunnow.

That the obsolete Russian arms were sent to Servia in order that they might some day be used against the Turks can scarcely be doubted ; but the receipt of the weapons had no effect in stimulating the recipients

to immediate action. There was a show of insurrection in 1866. But the Servians made no use of the Russian muskets until nearly thirteen years after their arrival; by which time they must have been considerably out of date and more likely to lead their bearers to destruction than to enable them to destroy their enemies. General Tchernaiëff, an honest and ingenuous man, made no secret of the fact that on entering Servia he took with him a stock of arms for distribution among the Bulgarian villages on the Servian frontier. The terrified inhabitants, however, after receiving them carried them back to their donors, awestruck by the recent massacres—of which Tchernaiëff had no knowledge at the time. They feared lest the possession of arms, which they were afraid to use, might be counted against them and bring upon them and their families indiscriminate slaughter.

The arrival of General Tchernaiëff at Belgrade caused the greatest excitement throughout Europe; and every one interested in the Eastern Question came to the conclusion that he and his volunteers were the advanced guard of a Russian Army marching to the assistance of the Servians. So in a certain sense they were. But they were genuine volunteers, and in taking command of them Tchernaiëff was acting on his own responsibility without authority and really in opposition to it.

Particularly instructed to find out all he could about Tchernaiëff's Russians, Mr. White reported that of the men, some had only just quitted the Russian Army; but that others were fully retired soldiers, and others, again, enthusiastic, enterprising civilians. The officers, however, had in nearly all cases quitted the Russian Army expressly with a view to Servia, and apparently on the understanding that they might rejoin their regiments after the war. The

Emperor Alexander's words to Lord Augustus Loftus on this subject have already been referred to. He had allowed his officers, said His Majesty, to retire from the army and go to Servia, *pour jeter de l'eau froide*; though, if a figurative expression was to be used, "by way of opening a safety valve" would perhaps have been a more suitable one.

One strange thing mentioned by Mr. White, and even now not generally known, is that out of three hundred of Tcherniaieff's officers, one hundred were Germans; men, no doubt, who had acquired the habit of fighting in the Franco-German War, and whose time hung heavy on their hands when, after the making of peace, they retired into private life.

Many persons have supposed, by reason of his frequent contests with M. Nelidoff at Constantinople, that Sir William White was a constant enemy of the Russians. If so, he was a most candid, a most truthful foe. His reports about the Russians in Servia are nearly all to their advantage. Into the question of their right to be in the country for war purposes he does not enter, but he asserts positively that they have not been sent by the Russian Government. They had come of their own accord; partly perhaps from love of adventure, chiefly from enthusiasm.

After a brilliant career in Central Asia, Tcherniaieff, who had taken too many cities, and annexed too much territory to suit at that moment the official programme of the Russian Government, was presented, in acknowledgment of his military merits, with a sword of gold, and for political reasons was placed on the retired list. A series of expectations and disappointments having at last left him without hope of further employment in the Army, he became a militant journalist, and attacked the

minister of war in the columns of the *Russian World*. Three other officers, Panslavists like himself, belonged to the newspaper staff of which Tcherniaeff was chief. One was Colonel Komaroff, who afterwards acted in Servia as chief of Tcherniaeff's staff in a military sense; another, Colonel Monteverde whom Tcherniaeff despatched as military correspondent to the Herzegovina; and a third, General Fadeieff, who in a vigorously written pamphlet had set forth the famous thesis that the Russian road to Constantinople lies through Vienna—now a difficult path in face of the triple alliance.

Tcherniaeff wished to go himself to the Herzegovina. But the Russian Government looked with disfavour on the idea; and he had to content himself with opening at his newspaper office a subscription on behalf of the Herzegovinians and making an appeal in their favour to the Slav committee of Moscow, which numbered him among its members.

When, however, it became evident that Servia was going to war, Tcherniaeff could no longer restrain himself; and he at once hurried towards the scene of action. At Bucharest, Giurgevo, and Galatz he found Bulgarian committees, their members consisting chiefly of persons who had left Bulgaria and thriven in Roumania. They all looked forward to a general insurrection in Bulgaria; and the committees assured Tcherniaeff that they had bought up all the arms that could be purchased in Roumania. Bulgarians who were officers in the Russian Army quitted that service to join the projected insurrection of which the Russian papers were full. About two thousand Bulgarians, mostly peasants, were being made into soldiers in Roumania, under the command of Bulgarian officers from Russia and leaders who had taken part in the Bulgarian insurrection of 1867.

"Tcherniaeff's belief," said Mr. Archibald Forbes in a highly interesting sketch of the Russian general, which he was kind enough to write for me, "is that the Turks, becoming aware that an insurrection was being organised, anticipated its outbreak by the sweepingly effective method of leaving nobody alive to carry out his intention of becoming an insurgent. That does not disguise the fact that a general rising of the Bulgarians was in course of organisation."

So far, however, was Bulgaria removed from the great lines of European communication, that no news of the massacres had reached Tcherniaeff when, in the month of June, he entered Servia. Nor had the Russian general heard of them when on July 1, he invaded Bulgaria, bent on provoking a Bulgarian insurrection on his own account.

One man at least in Servia had received news of the Bulgarian rising; for Sir Henry Elliot had written to Mr. White about it on May 26. But it was not news that the English diplomatic agent was likely to put into general circulation.

If Tcherniaeff had invaded Bulgaria on May 1, instead of July 1,—before, instead of long after, the massacres, which took place in the middle of May—his daring project might have had some chance of success; though he never could have realised his dream of penetrating to Constantinople at the head of an improvised army of Servians and Bulgarians—not even with some thousands of Russian volunteers to stiffen the invading force.

He felt confident, however, that just as Servia had taken the field on behalf of the South Slavonians, so in the end Russia would take the field as leader of Slavonians in general.

At last came Djunis, when the attitude of a few

thousand Russian volunteers showed that whatever the head and front might be, the backbone of the Slavonian movement against Turkey was indeed Russia. After Djunis Alexander II. appeared on the scene and declared that there must be peace and some sort of beneficial arrangement for the defeated ones, or Russia would declare war.

It was in May, 1876, that Mr. White's attention was first diverted from the condition of the Servian Jews, who theoretically were being persecuted, to that of the Bulgarian Christians who as a matter of fact were being massacred.

On May 26, 1876, the subjoined letter was addressed by Sir Henry Elliot at Therapia to Mr. White at Belgrade. Sir Henry had previously sent a similar one to the Foreign Office. He already knew that the Bulgarian attempt at insurrection had been suppressed, and felt sure, from irregular troops having been employed, that it had been suppressed with much cruelty ; against which he lost no time in making an energetic protest.

"My dear Mr. White," the letter began, "the accounts from your parts are not calculated to inspire much confidence ; and the whole state of this country is such that the people are always asking what is to happen next. The impression not only from Turkish, but from impartial sources is that nothing will come of the Bulgarian movement. The Russian Ambassador declares that there is nothing political in it ; but nothing is more certain than that there were ample warnings (neglected by the Turks) of a movement about to take place, organised from abroad. Russian roubles are circulating in unusual quantities : but equally good informants differ in opinion as to the quarter from whence they come. The common belief is that they are sent by the Committees in Russia ; but some are under the impression that this is not the case, and that the money comes from wealthy Bulgarians settled in Odessa and other Russian towns.



"The distinction is not perhaps a very important one.

"The Russian Consul at Adrianople and the Vice-Consul at Philippopolis have both come here: the popular agitation against them being so great that they did not, I imagine, feel themselves in safety. The latter is a Bulgarian long known to have been an agent of the Committees; and one of his brothers is at this moment said to be in arms among the insurgents.

"There is no excuse for the measures adopted by the Turks in arming Bashi Bazouks, Circassians and gipsies, whose outrages are driving peaceful villagers to desperation and revolt. I am doing what I can to have this put a stop to.<sup>1</sup>

"You may have received alarming accounts of the dangers which are supposed to threaten the Christians here. But although there was an extreme panic, people are now satisfied that the movement was wholly political and directed against the Government, without a vestige of hostility against the Christians. Indeed, the harmony existing between the two religions at this moment is one of the most striking features in the present strange position. But in the provinces this is different; and things might take a turn which would place them in deadly hostility.

"I hope that Serbia will continue to be convinced, as you say she is, that it is too late for her to move. But if she does move she will be met with greater energy than may perhaps be expected considering the general embarrassments by which Turkey is at this moment surrounded."

Sir Henry Elliot wrote as follows to Mr. White on June 29:

"I have written to Tenterden to say that you must be worked off your legs and ought to have help.

"Your previsions appear about to be realised; for we are expecting every moment to hear of Serbia and Montenegro passing the frontiers.

<sup>1</sup> This passage, written just four weeks before news of the outrages reached the English public, shows that Sir Henry Elliot was well informed from the beginning as to the excesses with which the Bulgarian movement was being crushed and that he at once did his best to bring them to an end.

"I quite agree in all you say of the feelings which will be caused throughout Europe through the excesses sure to be committed by the Bashi Bazouks; but what can be done? In a mountainous country irregulars may be of more service or as much so as regulars; and in the face of such an utterly unprovoked attack the Turks will retaliate with every instrument within their reach."

"It is difficult to believe that the Servians could calmly play such an apparently desperate game unless they had better reasons than we are aware of for counting upon some powerful assistance."

The anticipations entertained by Sir Henry Elliot and Mr. White as to the indignation that would be caused "in England and in Europe generally" by news of the outrages committed by the Turkish irregular troops were fully realised—at least in England; for "Europe generally" was much less agitated by the intelligence.

The information, however, received by the English Government from its Ambassador at Constantinople was kept back, in the evident hope that the horrible affair would perhaps blow over and that the "Bulgarian movement" with its immediate consequences might be regarded as already at an end.

It was not until some weeks later (June 23) that light was thrown on the subject by the Constantinople correspondent of the *Daily News*; and it was on June 26, one month after the date of Sir Henry Elliot's letter on the subject to Mr. White, that the matter was first mentioned in the House of Commons; when Mr. Disraeli declared that, compared with the official accounts received, the reports of the *Daily News* correspondent seemed greatly exaggerated.

At last, when the horrible truth became known, it was assumed by many that Sir Henry Elliot had not kept his Government properly informed, and, worse still, that he looked upon the outrages committed by the Bashi

Bazouks, gipsies, and Circassians, if not with tolerance at least without strong condemnation. Sir Henry Elliot, however, had done his duty from the first.

At last the attacks made upon him became so violent that the Ambassador was forced to defend himself; and he wrote in one of his despatches, when from his habitual calmness he had been goaded into anger, that England in accepting Turkey as an ally knew that she was binding herself to a semi-civilised state, and that her policy once decided upon had to be maintained, whether her ally massacred ten, twenty, or thirty thousand persons.

Had not the Turks, indeed, massacred Christians in Scio and Syria long before the days of the Bulgarian atrocities—just as they massacred Christians by tens of thousands in Armenia twenty years afterwards?

After a long delay Sir Henry Elliot on July 19 sent to Bulgaria Mr. Baring, a member of his embassy, who, accompanied by his father-in-law, Mr. Guarracino, went to Adrianople, Philippopolis, and Batak, where the most horrible of all the massacres had been committed, to report fully both as to the rising and the atrocities perpetrated in quelling it. Nothing could exceed the cruelties, the indignities, the horrors related by Mr. Baring; the only important point in which his narrative differed from that of previous correspondents being in regard to the significance and magnitude of the insurrection by which the massacres had been provoked. There had really been a rising, accompanied by violence and bloodshed.

In an introductory letter, enclosing Mr. Baring's report, Sir Henry Elliot admitted that the cruelties fully justified the indignation they had called forth; but he added that the number of victims which at one time had been

estimated at sixty thousand, and afterwards thirty thousand, had fortunately been exaggerated. Mr. Baring had heard them calculated at figures varying from eighteen hundred to three hundred thousand. By careful inquiry he concluded that about twelve thousand had been massacred at Philippopolis alone. The insurrection had been planned by a number of schoolmasters and priests; and, to encourage the rising, those who hesitated were assured that a Russian Army in support of the movement was already on the march and would soon cross the Balkans.

"The schoolmasters," said Mr. Baring's report, "are men who have many of them been educated in Russia. They have returned to their homes with a smattering of education and a mass of ideas respecting Panslavism in their heads. The plan was as follows: To destroy as much of the railway as possible, to burn the rolling-stock, to set fire to Adrianople in a hundred, and to Philippopolis in sixty places, and also to burn Sofia and a number of villages; to attack the Turkish and mixed villages and to kill all Mussulmans who resisted, and take their property. . . . The rising to be joint and simultaneous; such Bulgarians as refused to join the insurgents, to be forced into it and their villages burnt."

Formidable, however, as the insurrection may have been in design, it possessed no military importance, and at the first appearance of the regular troops collapsed.

Mr. White knew nothing of the Bulgarian massacres beyond what had reached him through Constantinople in Sir Henry Elliot's letters and afterwards through the English newspapers. But massacre was in the air, the word "atrocities" was on every one's lips, and Mr. White, like all the British agents in the Balkan Peninsula, was now instructed to send whatever information he could obtain as to outrages committed by Turks upon Slavonians, or by Slavonians upon Turks.

This inquiry was extended later on to the conduct of Russians and Turks in action and immediately afterwards; the promoters of the inquiry in this case being Russian generals whose indignation had been roused by baseless charges brought in the vaguest manner against the Russian troops. Colonel Wellesley, English military attaché at St. Petersburg, who was accompanying the Russian Army in an official character, thought his own negative information as to the acts charged against the Russians insufficient; and he appealed therefore to some of the principal correspondents who had been more at the front. Thereupon, a paper was signed by the late Colonel Charles Brackenbury, military correspondent of the *Times*, and by the correspondents of *Le Temps*, and other trustworthy representatives of the foreign Press, testifying that at the end of a battle they had seen on the Russian side the Turkish wounded attended with every care by Russian surgeons, but on the Turkish side Russian corpses mutilated and beheaded.

The examples of revolting cruelty and barbarous mutilation which had come within Mr. White's notice had all been committed by Turks upon Servians.

At one time, the whole Consular service in the Slavonian provinces of the Balkan Peninsula was put into commotion by the account which Canon Liddon and the Rev. Malcolm MacColl published of an impalement they believed themselves to have seen on the banks of the river Save. The activity of our agents in regard to this matter extended even to Pesth, where Mr. Harriss Gastrell called attention to the fact that of the hundreds of persons travelling by steamer and passing to and fro by other means, close to the spot where the outrage was said to have been committed, not one had seen anything of it

He added, however, that whether it happened or not, it was the sort of thing that might well have occurred.

Bishop Strossmayer, consulted on the subject, lost his temper and said it was ridiculous to trouble him about one isolated act of barbarity, which the Turks might, or might not have committed, when in so many massacres they had perpetrated them by tens of thousands.

Scio, Syria, Bulgaria Armenia are indeed the names associated with the most characteristic exploits of the Turks during the last three-quarters of a century.

The public mind was over-excited at the time on the subject of massacres, and all kinds of "atrocities"; and the question of impalement or non-impalement was discussed by some as though torture and death by this horrible means had never been heard of in Turkey. In justice to the Turks, it must be said that they by no means reserved this cruel punishment for Christian victims. Moltke, when in 1839 he was attached as Adviser to the Turkish Army sent against the Egyptians, saved by his own personal intercession a party of Turkish robbers from being impaled.

The practice, too, was common at the beginning of the century in Egypt; where the French under Napoleon impaled the assassin of General Kléber. For French and English still adopt (at least for special occasions) the favourite punishments of the people they subjugate.

It must not be supposed that the Turks had not on their side well-founded, fully authenticated complaints to make of cruelty and outrage on the part of Russians and Bulgarians. The following statement as to what took place in Bulgaria after the entry into that region of the Russian troops was signed by the correspondents of the *Manchester Guardian*, *Koelnische Zeitung*, *Standard*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Journal des Débats*, *Morning Post*,

*République Française, Pester Lloyd, Wiener Tagblatt, Illustrated London News, Neue Freie Presse, Times, Morning Advertiser, New York Herald, Scotsman, Graphic, Wiener Vorstadt Zeitung, Daily Telegraph, and Manchester Examiner :*

“The undersigned representatives of the foreign Press assembled at Schumla consider it their duty to record under their own signatures the substance of the accounts which they have sent separately to their journals of the acts of inhumanity committed in Bulgaria against the inoffensive Mussulman population. They declare that they saw with their own eyes and interrogated at Schumla children, women, and old men wounded by lance thrusts and sabrecuts, without speaking of wounds from fire-arms which might be attributed to the chances of legitimate warfare. These victims give horrible accounts of the treatment inflicted by the Russian troops, and sometimes also by the Bulgarians on the Mussulman fugitives. According to their declarations, the Mussulman population of several villages was entirely massacred, either on the roads or in the villages given up to pillage. Every day fresh victims come in. The undersigned affirm that the women and children are the most numerous among these victims, and that most of the wounds are from the lance. Schumla, 20 July, 1877.”

The names of the correspondents follow.

The despatches published in Blue Books between the years 1876 and 1879 on the subject of cruelties committed by Turks upon Bulgarians, Servians and Russians, and by Servians, Russians and Bulgarians upon Turks, would, bound together, form a considerable number of good-sized volumes ; a handsome library, in fact.

On August 24, 1876, Mr. White, with the other Consuls and Diplomatic Agents at Belgrade, had been summoned to the Palace where Prince Milan announced his willingness to accept an intervention on the part of the great Powers with a view to peace. Before, however, the

negotiations could be commenced, the Turks gained a new advantage over the Servians, attacking their army under the walls of Alexinatz and completely defeating it. The Servians, and especially the Servian artillery, are said to have fought well on this occasion. But, according to an opinion expressed in friendly conversation by their leader, General Tcherniaeff, the Servians in general though satisfactory enough as militia were worth very little as regular troops. They would defend with courage, that is to say, their domestic hearths but could not be counted upon for campaigning work on a large scale and away from home.

The Battle of Alexinatz was fought on September 1, and on the evening of that day England proposed a month's armistice. Turkey would not consent to any sort of truce, but was prepared to make peace if Prince Milan would do homage at Constantinople. Four, moreover, of the Servian fortresses were to be garrisoned by Turkish troops, while the Servian tribute was to be increased and the Servian Army diminished. Turkey seemed resolved to make the terms of peace as difficult as possible; and the Powers all agreed in regarding them as unreasonable. That, too, was Mr. White's view.

Enough, however, of a war which was fought throughout on the understanding that the Servians with their Russian supporters might beat the Turks, but that the Turks must under no circumstances beat the Servians.

The Turks showed during the campaign that they could still make war. But their indignation at being first provoked into taking up arms and afterwards compelled in the moment of victory to lay them down rendered them unable to make peace.

Some three weeks before the forced conclusion of the



Turko-Servian War, Count Schuvaloff had already informed Lord Derby that the Russian Emperor was most anxious to bring it to an end ; and he wished this result to be attained not by Russia alone, but by the combined action of Russia, Austria, and England. Russia, according to the Emperor's suggestion, would occupy Servia and Austria Bosnia ; while the English fleet could pass the Straits and show itself in the Bosphorus. If the naval demonstration on the part of England seemed sufficient, the Emperor was ready to abandon all idea of occupying Turkish territory.

The English Cabinet was willing to press for a month's armistice, but objected to the military occupation by Russia and Austria and could not undertake by means of a naval demonstration to impose terms of peace upon Turkey. Lord Derby then proposed that a Conference should assemble at Constantinople to consider the general situation.

Turkey, however, stuck to her idea of an armistice for half a year, during which period of delay she proposed to introduce the most important reforms and to set her house in order generally. Most of the Powers accepted the Turkish view of the situation. Russia, however, argued that Servia could not be expected to undergo the strain of keeping her army for the next six months on a war footing.

The usual appeal was made to Prince Bismarck who informed Lord Derby that, though the German Government considered the idea of a six months' armistice reasonable enough, it could not press this idea upon any other power. In the end the Turks accepted an armistice for a month.

The arrangements for the Conference having all been made, Lord Salisbury, on November 20, left London to

attend it. Mr. White had been already informed that he was to act as *adlatus* to his lordship.

On his way to Constantinople, Lord Salisbury made a diplomatic journey of an appropriately circuitous kind, visiting in the course of his travels Berlin, Vienna and Rome. Some of the incidents of this political tour, with the conversations to which they gave rise, were set forth in a series of despatches published in Blue Book form. Nor did Lord Salisbury omit to relate the particulars of his first interview with General Ignatieff at Constantinople. This was of the most friendly character.

Every one had expected that England and Russia would be in antagonism throughout the Conference, and this anticipation was strengthened by Lord Salisbury's visit to the Prussian, Austrian, and Italian, but not to the Russian Court. But Berlin, Vienna, Rome were all more or less on the way to Constantinople, whereas a visit to St. Petersburg would have involved a very round-about journey. There was another reason. But once arrived at Constantinople, Lord Salisbury found it an easy matter to come to an understanding with General Ignatieff; as he did a year later in London with Count Schuvaloff, before the Conference of Berlin.

France was represented at the Conference by Count de Chaudordy, Ambassador Extraordinary, and Count de Bourgoing, Ambassador Resident; Austria by Count Calice, Ambassador Extraordinary, and Count Zichy, Ambassador Resident. General Ignatieff, with characteristic self-confidence, dispensed with the assistance of any Ambassador Extraordinary from St. Petersburg; while Germany and Italy were content to leave their interests respectively to the care of their resident ambassadors, Baron Werther and Count Corti.

The latter diplomatist is said to have observed just

before the Conference began its labours that the assembled delegates were in the position of architects proposing to make alterations in the house of a man who did not wish his house to be altered. The Sultan, moreover, in his character of "sick man," was likened to a patient whom a number of doctors assembled in consultation insisted on treating without having been called in.

An understanding between Lord Salisbury and General Ignatieff having so soon been reached, it was scarcely possible that the representatives of the other Powers would not fall into line. The harmony between the counsellors was, in fact, perfect ; and but for the counselled one not a discordant note would have been heard.

Mr. White's particular duty in connection with the Conference was to furnish Lord Salisbury with information as to the condition of the Christian provinces and principalities of the Porte ; the aspirations of their populations and their legal position ; the system of administration under which they lived ; the way in which this administration was conducted, and so on. He had passed scarcely more than a year in Servia. But all that related to the Slavonian provinces of Turkey was, so far as it could be ascertained by study, known to him before he went to Belgrade ; and he had been assiduous in his journeyings and his researches ever since his arrival. It will be remembered, too, that when Mr. White was Consul at Dantzic he made, by the direction of the Foreign Office, a political tour of observation in Hungary and its Slavonian provinces.

Until now a knowledge of European-Turkey had been held to mean knowledge of the Turkish language and of Turkish methods of government. Sir Henry Layard, as appears from more than one of his letters to Sir William White, held, even after the treaty of Berlin, when

European-Turkey in its old form had been destroyed, that a mastery of the Turkish language was still an all-important part of the necessary equipment of a young man preparing himself for Consular and Diplomatic Service in the East ; while Servian seemed to him, by comparison, of slight value.

In connection with the affairs of Turkey in Europe, Mr. White was the very man for whom, thirteen years before, the late Lord Strangford had been seeking, and seeking in vain, when in his famous chapter entitled "Chaos," appended to Lady Strangford's "Eastern Shores of the Adriatic," he wrote as follows :

"The most remarkable fact in Turkey is the awakening of the subject nationalities, the rising cultivation of their languages, and the utter untrustworthiness of their talk about themselves when not properly controlled. But we have no Englishman who knows anything whatever about Servian, about Bulgarian, or, beyond a moderate point, about Wallachian ; yet the language of each nationality, Turkish hardly excepted, is its life-blood."

Lord Strangford did not at that time (1863) know of Mr. White's existence, though he and Lady Strangford were afterwards numbered among Mr. White's best friends. The future Ambassador was still Vice-Consul at Warsaw, where, towards the end of 1863, he made the acquaintance of Mr. (afterwards Sir) M. E. Grant Duff, who, in the year following, introduced him to Lord Strangford in London.

I find among Sir William White's papers an interesting letter addressed to him by Lady Strangford in the year 1887, in which she signs herself, "Your faithful friend and admirer."

To return to the Conference : in one of Sir Henry Layard's letters to Sir William White, Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff is said to have described the Berlin Conference

as "*une comédie d'Offenbach*." That was a mistake. But there was really a little of the *opéra bouffe* element in the proceedings at the Conference of Constantinople.

After the Turkish President had made an impotent attempt to explain away the Bulgarian massacres discharges of artillery were suddenly heard, and the President of the Conference surprised his fellow-members by informing them that these formidable salutes announced the promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution. "A great act," he said, "accomplished at this very hour, changes the form of government which has endured for six hundred years. The constitution which His Majesty the Sultan has bestowed on his Empire is promulgated. It inaugurates a new era of happiness and prosperity for the people."

The Sultan was now a constitutional sovereign. The liberty of his subjects was guaranteed, and they were all, whether Mahometan or Christian, equal before the law, and alike eligible for public offices. The proceedings of the law courts were to be public; suitors were to be represented by advocates, and the judges were to be irremovable. A Chamber of Deputies and a Senate were to be established, and no tax could be imposed or levied except in virtue of the law.

The French representative, Count de Chaudordy, remarked that until peace was established the Constitution could not have a fair trial; and this view was supported by Lord Salisbury and General Ignatieff.

Safvet Pasha replied that the new Constitution must be regarded as a means towards securing and perpetuating peace.

The Conference in general, however, looked upon the Constitution merely as a device for impeding the business of the Assembly. No one seems to have believed in

it except Sir Henry Elliot—and, above all, Sir Henry Layard; who, a year or two after its promulgation, speaks of it in more than one letter to Sir William as though it were a living institution, in full activity. The author of the Constitution was an earnest reformer, Midhat Pasha; a man of energy, of liberal views, and of scrupulous honesty, who in the province placed under his government made roads, built bridges, and provided schools.

A dozen years later, in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*, Sir Henry Elliot wrote an interesting and instructive article on Turkish affairs, in which he pays a high tribute to Midhat Pasha, and expresses his full belief in the practical value of his constitution. The reader of the article cannot but wonder why these views were not insisted upon at the Conference when the Turk was told, first, that he must introduce reforms, and secondly, that the reforms he had ready for introduction could not be considered. On the other hand it may be said that if Turkey wished to introduce general reforms that constituted no reason why she should not carry out the specific reforms insisted upon by the Powers.

To the somewhat commonplace objection that Midhat Pasha's constitution was only a "paper Constitution," Sir Henry Elliot well replies that it is impossible to improvise an ancient constitution based on tradition, and that every constitution has had for its origin a document of some kind. Still, if the Turks generally had believed very much in their Constitution they might, on their own account, have introduced it after the war.

At the first two meetings of the Conference little was done, the Turkish representatives declaring that they could accept nothing without referring to their Government. At the third meeting, General Ignatieff demanded

that the proposals made to the Porte should be accepted or rejected forthwith. The Turks, however, while declining to consider the proposals laid before them, insisted on their own counter proposal—the acceptance of the Turkish Constitution.

One of the strangest suggestions put forward by the Powers was that Bulgaria should be occupied by a Belgian gendarmerie; an arrangement to which the consent of the Belgian Government had not been asked and which the government of Turkey at once rejected. The representatives of the European Powers showed themselves in many ways most accommodating; though by diminishing their demands daily they encouraged the Turks to refuse the little which was still required from them.

In the end the Powers would not consider the Turkish proposals, while the Turks refused to entertain the proposals submitted to them. War even now was not absolutely inevitable. It was just possible that Turkey left to herself, might carry out her promised reforms. Such a course, however, seemed to Russia so improbable—perhaps so undesirable—that she hastened to commence the hostilities which had for some time past been in preparation.

Lord Derby addressed a strong protest to the Russian Government, maintaining that Turkey should have been allowed time to carry out the reforms she had pledged herself to introduce. Disapproving of the war, it followed as a matter of course that England could not be counted upon to acquiesce in any advantages that Russia might seek to derive from it.

While the Conference was going on, Mr. White received the following letter from Sir Robert Morier at Lisbon :

"BRITISH LEGATION, LISBON.

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I have just seen in the papers that you have been appointed to act as *adlatus* to Lord Salisbury; you will readily imagine how great was my satisfaction at this appointment. I ought to have told you long ago (only you know I am weak as a correspondent) that when I was in London this summer, I learnt not only from the *Dii Minorum Gentium* at the Office, but directly from the Olympians, that you had given the highest satisfaction. You will be a deal too busy to wish to have a long *tartine* from me, and besides, my work here is not of a kind to interest a man and a brother. I have bid adieu to Europe and can only look on to this great crisis as if it were a pantomime or Schatten-spiel played by silhouettes whom I used to know in a former state of existence but all strange to me now. Nevertheless, I cannot help taking an interest in the plot and in the performances of the various actors, and there is a solution which seems to me so obvious that I do want to know, should you ever have time to write to me, why it has never yet been proposed. The only difficulty that I can see is the question of occupation. I cannot suppose that with the Syrian precedent we shall obstinately refuse the principle of occupation in any shape. The difficulty must be as to who should occupy. The *poco curantes* won't. The parties really interested, Russia and England, are each jealous of the other. Why has not a joint Anglo-Russian occupation ever been suggested? This seems to me to solve *all* difficulties. As long as we are there the Turks have nothing to dread from Russian occupation nor the Christians from Turkish barbarity. By proposing this joint occupation to Russia we checkmate any ulterior views she may have, at the same time that we afford her the guarantee she requires for the enforcing of the new state of things in Bulgaria. But just conceive all the benefits we might derive from such a comparative study of Russian and English occupiers for our own prestige in the East! We have always had it in our own power—I have not ceased to din that into the ears of the F. O.—to make ourselves the *point d'appui* of the Christians in the Turkish Empire, and thus take all



the wind out of the sails of Russia ; and after the population had seen the difference between an English and a Russian occupation it would jump to the eyes even of the blind, and we should *débiter* into a new policy at Constantinople with an immense advantage.

" These, however, are all derivatory considerations. The importance of this solution suggests itself to me because it is the only way out of a dilemma.

" If we assent to the occupation by Russia alone we eat humble pie.

" If we dissent from that occupation, and no one else is ready to occupy, we go against the whole feeling of Europe. The joint occupation settles everything.

" Yours sincerely,

" R. B. MORIER."

Before returning to his post at Belgrade, Mr. White wrote to Sir Robert Morier, January 16, 1877, as follows :

" MY DEAR MORIER,

" I was extremely gratified to receive your kind and affectionate letter the other day ; and though my time here is not my own, and I have hardly any to spare, you must nevertheless get a line before I leave this spot—the most beautiful by nature, but rendered rather beastly by man.

" When the secret history of this Conference is written, it will be a strange revelation, as Lord Salisbury and his mission are exposed to every kind of abuse and shaking of the head, more especially on the part of the English residents here, and particularly of those who stand well with our own regular Embassy. The latter is very unfortunately composed, and the selection does little credit to F. O. I do not speak of the chief or of his son Francis—the latter is a nice young man full of tact and hope. But the other three secretaries (Baring is away) are below the average of the ordinary class of our Diplomatic Service and are chiefly distinguished by their Russophobia which they bring prominently forward in and out of season. The Dragomen, including the first Oriental Secretary, are all Levantines of a very bad type and suspected of being corrupt. The service of the Embassy, *i.e.*, its political influence, is reduced to *nil*.

"Now Lord Salisbury during his diplomatic tour to Continental Courts convinced himself that no Power was disposed to shield Turkey—not even Austria if blood had to be shed for the *status quo*; and his Lordship came here determined to prepare for a new line of policy. As soon as the regular Embassy twigged this they commenced opposing him more or less openly, saying he was deceived by the Russians, *enguirlandé*<sup>1</sup> by Ignatieff, ignorant of Turkish usages and ways, etc., etc. As I have seen a good deal of Lord and Lady Salisbury, I have come in for my share of unpopularity with the other people and also with that queer set, our consuls in Turkey.

"You know me well enough. I did not come here to deceive Lord Salisbury or to defend an untenable Russophobe or pro-Turkish policy. The next Session of Parliament will no doubt be greatly affected by the negative results of this Conference which will be closed probably to-morrow.

"There will probably be a difference of opinion in the Cabinet as to our future line of policy, and I shall not wonder if Lord Salisbury should upset Dizzy and take his place or leave the Government on this question. If he does the latter the coach is indeed upset.

"Bismarck aims at preventing every pacific solution and involving Russia in a costly and dangerous war. He will continue to use Andrassy as his tool and will thus prepare two great results: the weakening of Russia and the partition of Turkey. If he can bring all this about—and for this there must be war—he will find it easy to isolate France permanently and to make some re arrangement of the map of Europe which will, in his opinion, strengthen and consolidate the *Reich*.

"The question for us is, first, to preserve peace on fair terms advantageous to the populations of this empire; secondly, if this fails, to watch over such portions as bear on our interests. It is certainly most important for us to prevent Bismarck from having altogether his own way in Europe. But to do this we must, whilst keeping well with France and Austria, draw nearer to Russia; and this has been Lord Salisbury's object, though he has been

<sup>1</sup> A term invented by M. de Custine in his brilliant but libellous book on Russia to denote the Russian's alleged custom of "encircling with flowers" those whom he wishes to deceive.

thwarted by the Premier at home and, to a certain extent, by some parties here.

"In my opinion the Conference is not a complete or open failure, as some people think; for it will show the people at home how obstinate and incorrigible the Turk is, and that the F. O. must mind better whom it employs in the service abroad. Your name has of course been mentioned, and it will be a happy day for me should I hear that the Olympians have determined to send you out here to take charge even provisionally of this Embassy.

"Some one with your rank in the service will have to be sent, as Sir Henry Elliot is not likely to come back very soon—if ever; and it will be impossible to fill up the ambassadorial post just now.

"I cannot say what Lord Salisbury will recommend, nor how far his recommendations will be attended to; but your name has been mentioned.

"How I wish that we could be brought nearer to each other and could work together!

"I have applied for leave, and propose starting from here on Tuesday the 23rd inst. I shall go at once to Belgrade, and thence, I trust, to London, as I want to follow Lord Salisbury there and hear what is going on."

On March 21, 1877, Morier sent to the above letter the subjoined reply:

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I received your very welcome letter of the 16 January in due course of time. Later on I saw in the correspondence from Belgrade that you had returned there, and that you had been ordered to give up 'your well-deserved leave' owing to the importance of your presence on the spot. I therefore shall not write to you in London as I had intended. Mrs. Morier, however, has just read out from the *Times* a list of Beust's guests and amongst them Mr. White. Now I do not believe that this can be other than you (alas! there are few Whites in the world and an outrageous lot of Blacks) so I suppose you have returned to the Fatherland and are enjoying the excitement of the situation. I was exceedingly interested in your letter as you may well imagine. It

was the first perfectly authentic piece of intelligence I had received in this out-of-the-way hole to which no one ever writes. I need not say that every word it contains is absolutely sacred. I have tried to use what you say as a key to what has happened since, but, alas! there was not enough to enable me to do so. Lord S——'s acceptance of the mission *with the instructions* he took out with him and his attitude since his return alike remain a complete puzzle to me. But as I know from experience the impossibility of solving such puzzles without the knowledge which only a few possess, I have given it up as a bad job. The abiding fact that remains after all is said and done, is the absolute and unconditional ineptitude of our International machinery—and to this there is no remedy. The country itself is mortally diseased with a *fatty heart*, and those that guide her destinies have the disease in an intensified form and there is no use shuffling about this. The Departmental people of the F. O. are the worst offenders. Their hatred of anything that rises above routine or carries with it the promise of a *policy* would be amusing if one could look at it with indifferent eyes and not as an interested party. I have felt it already here. There was plenty of excellent work to be done—the not doing of which is certain to lead to future catastrophes. . . . But *verbum sap*, to quote your own words. I need not tell you the kind of reception my proposals are likely to meet with.

The personal portion of your letter was not the least interesting—*Mais je ne me fais aucune illusion*. I should have liked nothing better than such an interim as you describe as having been talked of, with a man like Lord Salisbury at the F. O. to back me. But without such backing up, I confess I should have looked upon such an appointment with fear and trembling. There was an obvious arrangement to be made, and I confess I thought it would not have failed to be made with Lord Salisbury out there. I mean that you should have been left in charge of the mission as *Chargé d'Affaires* or Acting *Chargé d'Affaires* or under any other name that would have caused the fewest hysterics to F. O. clerks.

"When I saw poor dear old Jos had been left in charge. . . . I ought perhaps to have cried, but I fear I broke out into shrill and disagreeable laughter. I shall be very curious to see whom they send out. In the

profession there is absolutely no one fit for the place except Odo, and I suppose they cannot spare him at Berlin. Hudson is of course *the* man, but I fear there is no chance of their thinking of him, and I do not know whether his health would allow him to accept the post. But he was to be had for the asking as late as three or four years ago. It must end in their sending an outsider, and there I am nearly as much puzzled as ever. Bartle Frere and Dufferin would both be good men, but they are employed elsewhere. I have been sent a very ill-natured cutting from Labouchere's new paper *Truth*, saying I am a candidate and that no worse man could be chosen for the post. Then follows an unflattering notice of Thornton as another candidate; then a flaming description of Lord Napier as *the* man.

"Let me have a letter of gossip. You do not know what it is to be here high and dry, and for obvious reasons the people I might write to for gossip are people under actual circumstances that I would not for the world address. I shall always be grateful to the Oriental Question for one thing, which is that it has brought you to the fore and got your merits at last acknowledged.

"Do not forget what I urged on you the last time you were in England—to be chary of your good words in reference to me. I don't so much care about Lord Salisbury, but have specially Lord D—— in mind. He is the sort might think we hunted in couples *Verbum sap.*

"Yours sincerely,  
"R. B. M."

## CHAPTER VII

### SIR HENRY LAYARD AT CONSTANTINOPLE

SIR HENRY ELLIOT, having shown himself a little too Turkish for the popular taste, was transferred after the Conference of Constantinople to Vienna, when Lord Beaconsfield appointed an eminent Liberal, Sir Henry Layard, to replace him as Ambassador to the Porte. The ancient Liberals who had supported Poland in 1830, and Hungary in 1848, and who were bitterly opposed to Russia at the time of the Crimean War, were for the most part thorough-going Turks, and Sir Henry Layard was one of them. He was much more Turkish now than any of his fellows of the 1848 period; some of whom had lost confidence in the Turk, while others had never believed in him except as a counterpoise to Russia, and only admired him for the protection which, in spite of Russian menaces, he had given to the Hungarian refugees of 1849.

But the Liberals of the year 1877, the "Gee-Gees," as Sir Robert Morier called them,—the followers, that is to say of Gladstone and Granville,—could not abide the Turk; for which reason Sir Henry Layard, though like them he called himself a Liberal, was for Turkish affairs by no means their man. He was far more Turkish than Lord Salisbury, who had represented the Conservative Government at the Conference of Constantinople; infinitely more Turkish than Lord Derby, Conservative

Foreign Minister at the time, and quite as Turkish as Lord Beaconsfield himself.

But there was scarcely a statesman in Europe (including, of course, Sir Henry Layard) who, however well disposed towards the Turks, did not think important reforms indispensable in Turkey; and many no doubt believed that it would be a good thing if, to employ a phrase of Mr. Gladstone's (and of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's), the Turk could conveniently be turned "bag and baggage" out of Europe.

For the English Ambassadors who have shown themselves most strenuous in maintaining the Turkish Empire against its assailants have not for that reason been admirers of the Turks; and the statesman who first expressed a wish to see the Turks turned out of Europe "bag and baggage" was indeed Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. In a letter of the year 1826 to his cousin, George Canning, he wrote as follows:

"As a matter of humanity I wish with all my soul that the Greeks were put in possession of their whole patrimony, and that the Sultan was driven bag and baggage into the heart of Asia."<sup>1</sup>

Count Andrassy's favourite formula for Turkey—prescription, one might almost say—was "the *status quo* ameliorated." There is little or nothing in Sir Henry Layard's very numerous letters addressed to Mr. White from Constantinople to show that he thought any fundamental reforms necessary or even possible. He, also, preferred the "*status quo* very much ameliorated."

<sup>1</sup> "Life of the Right Hon. Stratford Canning Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe," by Stanley Lane-Poole. Whether Mr. Gladstone ever saw the letter from Mr. Stratford Canning containing the phrase in question may well be doubted. Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet was published in 1877, Mr. Lane-Poole's biography in 1888.

"Turkey in Europe," with its vassal states governing themselves peacefully and paying tribute to the suzerain only that he might defend them against foreign aggressors, without putting them to the expense of keeping up standing armies of their own: what could be better than this state of things if fairly worked, and how, moreover, could such an organisation be replaced?

At the time, however, of the Constantinople Conference, "Turkey in Europe" was already in a condition of complete anarchy. The vassal state of Servia and all the Slavonian provinces had already taken up arms against the Sultan, while the powerful vassal state of Roumania was to join the rebellion soon afterwards. An empire in which all the provinces and principalities were at war with the Imperial suzerain may have been a difficult one to replace; it was certainly not an easy one to maintain.

When as a young man Sir Henry Layard first visited Turkey the subject populations of the Balkan Peninsula were still in a dormant condition. The Russians in their latest war against Turkey (1828-29) had scarcely thought it worth while to wake them up; and some partial experiments made in that direction had proved utter failures. Roumanians, Servians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins used at that time to be spoken of collectively as "Greek Christians"; and the only constant champions of Christian independence against Mahometan tyranny were the Greeks with their bands of *hetæra*. Panslavism had not yet been conceived; or, if conceived—chiefly as a literary idea by professors and writers in Bohemia—had not yet been promulgated in Servia, still less in Bulgaria, as a political principle.

A curious record had been preserved by Sir William White of Sir Henry Layard's first visit to Servia; on



which occasion, he seems, as might have been expected, to have taken less interest in the Servians than in the Turks who ruled them; less in the British Consul-General and diplomatic agent at Belgrade, than in the Turkish Pasha who commanded the Belgrade fortress.

Sir Stratford Canning (afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe) was at that time British Ambassador at Constantinople; and he gave young Layard, in whom he took much interest, a letter of introduction to Mr. de Fonblanque, Consul-General at Belgrade. Here is the letter:

"CONSTANTINOPLE,  
"August 15th, 1842.

"DEAR SIR,

"The traveller who will deliver this letter to you is Mr. Layard, an English gentleman, who has been in several parts of Asia, and who wishes not to return to England without seeing a part of European Turkey. I have only known him since his arrival here, but his talents, his information, and his estimable character make me desirous of assisting him in the course of his travels, and I shall therefore feel obliged by your lending him such aid as your acquaintance with the country where you live may enable you to afford.

"Believe me,

"Very sincerely yours,

"STRATFORD CANNING.

"THOMAS DE GRENIER DE FONBLANQUE, ESQ."

Sir Stratford Canning's letter of introduction bears the following strange endorsement, apparently in the handwriting of Mr. De Fonblanque.

"CONSTANTINOPLE,"  
"August 15/42.

*"Sir Stratford Canning  
Introduces a  
Mr. Layard who wishes  
to see something of*

*European Turkey before  
he returns to England.*

(Mem. Mr. Layard  
did return to  
Constantinople  
after seeing something  
of European Turkey,  
and undermining  
me with the Pasha—all in the Ambassador's name."

Servia, it will be remembered, was in those days a self-governing state under a Christian Prince, but also under the constant surveillance and occasional shell-fire of a Turkish Pasha who commanded the garrison of the citadel, from which the Servian capital could be bombarded and, if thought necessary, destroyed.

Mr. de Fonblanque does not seem to have been a favourite with the Turks; and he was once, when taking a walk round the ramparts, attacked and seriously wounded by Turkish soldiers. Mr. Layard, on the other hand, entertained the most bitter contempt for the Servians; and it can easily be understood that in any conversation they may have held on the subject of Servia and the Turkish garrison, Mr. Layard and Mr. de Fonblanque would not have agreed.

Sir Stratford Canning's letter of introduction, with Mr. de Fonblanque's sarcastic endorsement, may have been found by Mr. White at the British Consulate when he arrived at Belgrade in 1875, thirty-three years after the letter was received and many years after Mr. de Fonblanque's death, which was hastened, if not directly caused, by the injuries he received at the hands of the Turks.

Mr. Layard's visit to Belgrade may possibly have been a visit of inspection; for, on his return to Constantinople, he did some work for Sir Stratford Canning's Embassy,

to which he was afterwards officially attached. Then he had a long and honourable career in England, where his Assyrian researches and his work on "Nineveh and its Remains" had made him famous. He was returned to Parliament, and in 1852 held the post of Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Lord John Russell's administration.

Returned to Parliament for Southwark in 1860, Mr Layard became in the year following Lord Palmerston's Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He was in office till 1866 under Lord Russell; and he joined Mr. Gladstone's Government as Chief Commissioner of Works in 1868, from which post he retired in the following year to accept the Legation at Madrid.

Having been promoted to Constantinople in 1877, Sir Henry Layard remained there throughout the Russo-Turkish War, during the Berlin Conference, and until the return of the "Gee-Gees" to power in 1880, when he was recalled, to be replaced by Mr. Goschen, who was sent out with the title of Special Ambassador.

No one could have been more anxious to save Turkey from the ruin which threatened her than Sir Henry Layard. His sympathy inspired him with hope, and his hope with conviction that Turkey was still a vigorous power. For him "Turkey in Europe" had by no means ceased to exist, and in two different letters he impresses upon Mr. White how desirable it is for a young man of ability bent on making his mark in connection with Eastern affairs to master the Turkish language rather than the tongues of the despised Slavonians.

"Do you wish to keep Mr. Cumberbatch permanently at Belgrade?" he writes; "and is he learning Turkish as well as Servian?"

And again:

"I am glad to hear that you are pleased with

Cumberbatch. Impress upon him that if he wishes to do well here and to get on he should work hard at Turkish, and learn to read and write it."

Mr. Cumberbatch, of whom Sir William White entertained a very high opinion, is now H.B.M's Consul at Smyrna.

Here are two highly interesting letters from Sir Henry Layard, written immediately after the completion of the "preliminaries" of San Stefano.

"BRITISH EMBASSY, CONSTANTINOPLE,

"Feb. 1, 1878.

"MY DEAR MR. WHITE,—

"Your last letter to me was of the 14th ultimo. I am not surprised at its melancholy tone—it is fully justified by the course of events. I telegraphed to you yesterday that the bases of peace and the armistice were to be signed that day. We are not yet officially acquainted with the conditions of peace—as the Porte has been warned so meaningly not to reveal them that, for once in a way, the secret has been kept. However, we know enough of them, if not all of them, to make it pretty clear that if they are carried out there is an end to the Turkish rule in Europe and to our influence in the East. They are scarcely less disastrous to Austria than they are to Turkey, for it is difficult to see how the Austro-Hungarian Empire can hold together when the greater part of Turkey in Europe is formed into a great Slav state which will be entirely dependent upon Russia if it be not speedily annexed to her. I should be very glad to have your views on this subject. Whatever may be the result of the war, and the peace ultimately concluded, I see in the proposed arrangements abundant seed of future disorders and wars. The Eastern Question will be very far from settled, although it may pass into another phase.

"The terms of peace will, of course, much depend upon the attitude of England and Austria. That there must be great and fundamental reforms in Turkish Administration no one can doubt. The utter rottenness of the

present system has been fully proved by the present war. The Empire has been sacrificed to palace intrigues, corruption, and incapacity. The man to whom all the disasters that have befallen Turkey must be mainly attributed—Suleiman Pasha—has been sustained by the palace party. He is either so utterly ignorant and incompetent, that he ought not to have been entrusted with a command, or he is a traitor. There are good grounds for suspecting that he is the latter. Months ago the Sultan and his ministers were warned that Suleiman was sacrificing the country, and yet some occult influence enabled him to get all honest and capable men out of the way, and to obtain for himself supreme command. Had it not been for this, the Russians would have been compelled to recross the Danube and to enter upon a second campaign. My only hope now is in the Turkish Parliament, which may yet do something towards bringing about those reforms, which are absolutely necessary for keeping together the fragments that may be left of the Turkish Empire.

Pray remember me kindly to Christich,<sup>1</sup> for whom I have much esteem. I shall be glad to hear from you whenever you have the means of writing to me, and leisure to do so.

“Yours very truly,  
“A. H. LAYARD.”

“CONSTANTINOPLE.  
“*March 1, 1878.*

“MY DEAR MR. WHITE,

As I have no means of sending a letter safely to you, I am somewhat discouraged about writing. My last from you was of the 5th of last month. The Turkish letter in it was duly presented. The gloomy view of the state of affairs here that you express is, I fear, too well justified. It is true that the peace will probably be signed to-morrow; but it is a peace which may lead to many wars. You probably know the conditions so far as they have transpired. I have yet no official knowledge of them, but I believe that those given by the Press are fairly correct. They amount to the end

<sup>1</sup> Late Servian agent at Constantinople, where he became one of Sir Henry Layard's most intimate friends.

of the Turkish rule in Europe. No bad thing if it could be replaced by any other that would suit the interests of peace, humanity, and civilisation. I am afraid that this New Bulgaria, a mere Russian dependency, and a number of small Slav states and communities, ready to take each other by the throat, will promote neither. As for Austria, I cannot understand how she allowed matters to go so far. You say that Count Andrassy has a regular scheme for replacing the old Ottoman Empire. It is time that we should know what it is. But it is not easy to form empires and states and to remodel the map of Europe without having recourse to Russian measures, which unsettle everything, and may lead to consequences of which those who employ them may be the victims.

"It has always appeared to me that the true policy of England and Austria with regard to Turkey was to keep matters as they were as long as possible; using at the same time their joint endeavours to improve the government of the country, and to secure, to Christians and Mussulmans alike, justice and equal rights, thus preparing them for the changes which were sooner or later, inevitable, but which might have been brought about without the frightful bloodshed and misery caused by this Russian invasion, and without the risk of plunging Europe into war.

"England and Austria had no rival interests in Turkey. On the contrary, we might have pulled earnestly and sincerely together, and have effected a deal of good.

"I grieve with you about the course taken by the Liberal party. Gladstone, carried away by a passionate hatred of Lord Beaconsfield and without any of those sentiments of national pride and dignity which distinguished the order of statesmen who directed our foreign policy in days gone by, has inflicted a blow upon his country from which she may never recover unless she is prepared to make enormous sacrifices.

"I hope Christich is well; pray give him my kind remembrances. I hear that Servia is little satisfied with the compensation to be given to her; and with a discontented Roumania, an anarchical Bulgaria, and ambitious Greeks, we have a pretty prospect before us.

"Yours truly,

"A. H. LAYARD."

The preceding letter is the last, or at least the last preserved by Sir William White, of the very numerous ones which Sir Henry Layard addressed to him at Belgrade.

The British Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent at Belgrade was now transferred to Bucharest; but without, for the moment, any promotion as regards rank.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MR. WHITE AT BUCHAREST

**R**OUMANIA under the name of "Moldavia and Wallachia," "Moldo-Wallachia," and in ordinary parlance the "Danubian principalities," was but little known to the West of Europe until the time of the Crimean War, when Turkey's twin vassal states on the Danube were occupied, first by Russia, as a menace to Turkey, afterwards by Austria, as a protection against Russia. The two self-governing tributary States were under the rule of Christian princes, or hospodars appointed by the Sultan. Their "orthodox" religion was in no way interfered with; and in the whole of Moldo-Wallachia there was not and never had been a single Mosque.

Originally the tribute payable to Turkey represented the right of being defended against external enemies. But this did not prevent the Sultan from ceding portions of Wallachia to Austria, which thus gained possession of the Bukovina; nor from making over a large piece of Moldavia to Russia, which acquired in this manner the province of Bessarabia.

Suffering, as they did in many ways, from the power of their Turkish suzerain, Moldavia and Wallachia were nevertheless self-governing States, with their own national administration; and so jealous were they of their nationality and of their well-established system of self-



government that when, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, some of the leading personages in Moldavia signed a convention with Peter the Great who was about to make war on Turkey, they stipulated that in case of his liberating Moldavia from its dependence on the Sultan he would introduce no Russian into the Moldavian administration. Positive pledges were given to that effect. The Moldavians had enough political discernment to see the necessity of guarding themselves beforehand against the dangerous patronage of their would-be liberators.

Roumania as an independent kingdom is little more than twenty years old, and as a united State under Turkish suzerainty only forty-two years old. But Moldavia and Wallachia (first brought together under the rule of Prince Couza in 1859) had enjoyed a national existence as separate principalities, with self-government, and a continuous political history for fifteen centuries.

The principalities were little known to the West. But they occasionally produced a man like Prince Cantemir, who, writing in the Latin language, made himself a name among West Europeans by his interesting histories of Turkey and the Turks, and by his descriptions of the strange, unfamiliar regions in which he had passed his eventful life.

In the present day no one has done so much to popularise Roumania directly and indirectly in all parts of the world as Carmen Sylva ; so that many persons more interested in literature than in politics know Roumania only through the writings of her illustrious Queen.

To casual political observers, the Danubian principalities seem to have been constantly getting "occupied"—now by Turkey, now by Russia, now by Austria. But for the Crimean War (which many a thoughtless

politician now declares to have been waged in vain) the Danubian principalities would have been annexed to the Russian Empire ; and it was seriously proposed before the meeting of the Conference of Paris, after the Crimean War, that they should be ceded to Austria so as to form a permanent bulwark against Russian aggression in the direction of Turkey. Austria was, as part of this arrangement, to make over her Italian provinces to our good ally in the Crimea, the King of Sardinia. But Austria was unwilling to place herself in a position of permanent hostility towards Russia, nor could she foresee that in a few years she would lose both Lombardy and Venetia without gaining anything in return.

In a project for the reconstruction of Poland, which during the insurrection of 1863, met with the approval of the Emperor Napoleon, Austria was to have ceded Galicia towards the construction of a new Polish State, and to have taken the Danubian principalities in exchange. Possible objections on the part of the Roumanians were not taken into consideration by the patriots of Poland. So selfish is patriotism !

In spite of the apparent uncertainty of her political fate, Roumania has never shown the slightest leaning towards consolidation with either of her powerful neighbours. She cherishes her ancient nationality in the most exclusive manner. Although ethnographers are not absolutely agreed as to the origin of the Roumanians—except, of course, that they are of Roman descent,—it is certain that for many centuries past they have guarded and preserved their nationality, surrounded on all sides by races of different origins, with the most scrupulous care ; regarding as foreigners from generation to generation all settlers within their boundaries to

whom special letters of naturalisation have not been granted. The traditional customs and laws on this head are referred to more than once by Mr. White in his despatches on the subject of Jewish Disabilities in Roumania.

Mr. White was transferred from Belgrade to Bucharest in a somewhat unceremonious manner, without credentials, without authority to recognise the independence of Roumania, just freed from vassalage ; but with instructions to obtain from the Roumanian Government the most favourable conditions in a new commercial treaty.

*Do ut des* is a sound commercial as well as diplomatic principle. But *Nego ut des* was the paradoxical formula which Mr. White had to apply.

"I am very glad," began the letter, addressed to him by Lord Salisbury, May 4, 1878, "that you are going to Bucharest. I believe your presence and action there will be of great value, and that during this Eastern crisis, at least, your knowledge of Slavonic tongues will be useful. Of course, what we want of all things just now is information respecting the Roumanian and Russian Armies, and the condition of things in Russia, Roumania and Hungary so far as you are able to ascertain them. Of course you will do all you properly can to encourage the plucky attitude of Roumania.

"We have sent you some work in the shape of a Commercial Treaty. It ought to have been done long ago, but they put it aside apparently from scruples as to whether Roumania was or was not an independent State. These, of course, are now at an end.

"Meanwhile, the Government will no doubt bear in mind that we are a nation of shop-keepers, and that the only sure way to our affections is through a liberal tariff.

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly,  
"SALISBURY."

Mr. (now Lord) Currie wrote to Mr. White from the

Foreign Office on the same day as Lord Salisbury the following complimentary letter :

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I congratulate you on your new post. It is a very important one at the present crisis, and will give scope to your talents. . . .

"Of course, it will be independent, and we have no wish that it should not be so. But any recognition of the Treaty of San Stefano is undesirable at present."

Mr. White then must have known tolerably well on being appointed to Bucharest that he would sooner or later be accredited to the Roumanian Court as Minister. The rank of Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent which he had held at Belgrade when Servia was a vassal State, would scarcely be good enough for an envoy to independent Roumania.

Six months afterwards, however, no decision had been come to, as to what the rank of the new envoy should be ; nor was the point settled until a much later date.

A letter received about this time (beginning of May) by Mr. White from Lord Odo Russell, shows that the British Ambassador at Berlin wished him to be called to the Berlin Conference, "as you were to the Conference at Constantinople."

On May 17, 1878, three days after Mr. White's appointment to Bucharest, Sir Henry Elliot wrote to him as follows from Vienna :

"BRITISH EMBASSY, VIENNA.

"*Tuesday.*

"MY DEAR MR. WHITE,

"Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment to Bucharest, which I suppose is official. It will be a more agreeable, as well as a more interesting post than Belgrade, though I am not sure that our friends the Egyptians would have selected you for it.

"Mansfield<sup>1</sup> passed through Vienna three days ago. He tells me that there is much exaggeration in the talk that is going on, of there being a practical Russian occupation of the Principality. On the other hand, the irritation at the demand for the cession of Bessarabia seemed genuine and universal, though there cannot be a doubt that the Prince and his Ministers knew from the first that Russia was determined to have it, and they went into the alliance with their eyes open. This is the one point upon which Gladstone thinks Russia open to some reproach. But Europe is not likely to go to war for the sake of saving Roumania from being plundered by her ally. The Roumanian Agents give it to be understood that if we go to war with Russia, nothing will induce their Government to move on her side, and if Austria went in with us, they wish it to be believed that they also would join.

The Roumanians were sorely puzzled by the task imposed upon them, and up to a certain point accepted, of dealing satisfactorily with the Jewish Question before their independence could be recognised. This was shown in many ways; and among others by a strange but heroic plan formed by Prince Jon Ghika for the total abolition of customs duties. Sir Henry Elliot brought this matter to Mr. White's notice in a letter from Vienna dated May 26, 1878:

"Jon Ghika," he wrote, "and Demetri Stourdza were here for a few days, the latter having gone back to Bucharest, where you will no doubt see him. If you do not already know him, you will find him a most reasonable and sensible man. When he was the Prince's agent at Constantinople, he always tried to keep matters straight with the Porte, and if he had been more listened to many misunderstandings would have been avoided.

"Ghika told me he is working to bring about the entire suppression of all custom duties in Roumania, which will singularly facilitate every commercial negotiation if it can be brought about. But how the loss of revenue would be

<sup>1</sup> Late Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent at Bucharest.

made up is more than I can see. He says it is the only way in which the Jew Question can be got rid of, after having been placed in such a bad position by the Austrian Treaty; that there are many articles largely consumed in Roumania, the whole of which are smuggled, and that if all duties were abolished the Principality would become the *entrepôt* for goods of all descriptions destined for their neighbours, and that as they have no industry or produce to protect by duties, there is no class that would be injured by the measure, while all would be gainers by it. All these arguments are very plausible, but the question whether the Principality can afford it will still remain."

On July 11, two days before the Berlin Treaty was finally signed, Mr. White wrote to Lord Odo Russell as follows :

"MY DEAR LORD ODO,

"I congratulate you upon the happy termination of your great task. It would have afforded me pleasure to have been near you at such a time—*aber man muss sich fügen*. Many friends were there, Sir Lintorn Simmons, Currie, William Lee, etc., etc.

"Since my arrival here I have had two unpleasant attacks of the indigenous fever. There has been very great (and not quite unnatural) irritation here, though the Prince, who is a most sensible man, has, like every one here, been extremely kind to me. There was some fear of the effects of a growing agitation, and it was not exactly easy to preach resignation to races having Latin blood in their veins. As a newcomer I had a little anxiety on that account, especially as I saw that my colleagues had still more. But the excitement has wonderfully abated within the last few days."

Three weeks after the Berlin Treaty had been signed, Lord Odo Russell sent to Mr. White the subjoined reply :

"BRITISH EMBASSY, BERLIN.

"4 August, 1878.

"MY DEAR MR. WHITE,

"I need not tell you that it was not my fault if you were not summoned to the Congress, for I was most

anxious to have you here. But all was hurried. The great object was to complete our task soon, and I think you will agree with me that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury have made a capital treaty.

"To my mind the Roumanians have been vastly benefited by the treaty; but they were determined to have a grievance which they could get no one to believe in. If I were a Roumanian I should make the Kustendji Canal and snap my fingers at Bessarabia. But they will probably prefer to waste their means in making an army and a diplomatic body like all the other minor Powers.

"Nothing could be more remarkable, more refreshing, and more satisfactory than the manner in which Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury placed their ultimatum, and carried their points with unflinching firmness in and out of the Congress.

"I felt proud of our diplomacy.

"*Au revoir*—soon, I hope.

"Yours sincerely,

"ODO RUSSELL."

In spite of Lord Odo Russell's opinion to the contrary, the Roumanians had really very much to complain of. The territory of which Russia insisted on depriving them formed an integral part of Moldavia; and those who talked of Roumania "giving back" the territory which Russia had ceded to Moldavia after the Crimean War forgot that Russia had taken this territory from Moldavia forty-four years previously, in 1812. One result of replacing the Danubian mouths in the hands of Russia has been that the Lower Danube is now navigated by Russian gunboats which have already paid (1901) an unexpected, undesired visit to Galatz.

When the Berlin Treaty had been signed, and the time had come for applying its provisions, Mr. White's difficulties, instead of being diminished, were greatly increased. The high contracting parties had pledged themselves to recognise the independence of Roumania

on its fulfilling the conditions laid down in the two following articles of the treaty :

"ARTICLE XLIV.—In Roumania the difference of religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, admission to public employments, functions, and honours, or the exercise of various professions and industries in any locality whatsoever.

"The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship will be assured to all persons belonging to the Roumanian State, as well as to foreigners, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organisation of the different communions, or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs.

"The nationals of all the Powers, traders or others, shall be treated in Roumania without distinction of creed, on a footing of perfect equality."

"ARTICLE XLV.—The Principality of Roumania restores to His Majesty the Emperor of Russia that portion of the Bessarabian Territory detached from Russia by the Treaty of Paris in 1856, bounded on the west by the waterway of the Pruth, and on the south by the waterway of the Kilia Branch and the mouths of Star-Stamboul."

There were two conditions, moreover, not mentioned in the Treaty with which it was absolutely necessary that Roumania should comply before her independence could be recognised by England, France, Austria, Germany, and Italy. She was to refuse to Russia the right of military way through the Dobrudja, which that Power was demanding, and to accede to certain terms required by Prince Bismarck in connection with one of her railways.

That the situation was serious in regard to the right of march through the Dobrudja is shown by documents which Mr. White received at this time from the Foreign



Office. The following memorandum sets forth the views entertained by Austria, probably also by England.

"If Roumania consents to give this right of military way, she will in fact be making herself Russia's ally for the purpose of carrying into effect the object which this demand for military passage must be assumed to contemplate. As this cannot possibly be in harmony with the Treaty of Berlin, Roumania is very likely to find herself held responsible for the facilities which she is now asked to give ; and if the fortune of war should go against Russia, it is very likely that European Statesmen will provide against any future dangers from Russia's ambition by making a new disposition of Roumanian territory. The absorption of a considerable portion of it into Hungary is not at all impossible. To this danger Roumania will have exposed herself if she now makes any arrangement with Russia inconsistent with or menacing to the Treaty of Berlin. If she refuses to give the required right of way, she may yet, when the time comes, find herself too weak to resist the demand of Russia. But then she will be yielding to *force majeure*. She will not be an accomplice in the guilt ; and if there is punishment, she will not have incurred any share in it. The commonest prudence ought therefore to lead her to keep clear of this quarrel."

In the first letter of instructions addressed to Mr. White after his appointment to Bucharest, Lord Salisbury had told him, among other things, to encourage, as much as he fairly could the "plucky attitude of Roumania." In the next few pages it will be seen what the attitude of Roumania really was.

## CHAPTER IX

### "THE PLUCKY ATTITUDE OF ROUMANIA"

WHEN the Russian Colossus, attacked in his vulnerable heel by England, France, Turkey, and Sardinia, with Austria keeping the ground against him in the Danubian provinces, was at last compelled to make peace, then a small cession of territory was required from the wounded and enfeebled giant, not for either of the attacking Powers, but for Moldavia ; not so much because the Powers which had proved victorious considered Moldavia entitled to it (though it had been violently torn from her forty-four years before), as because the territory demanded back from Russia contained the mouths of the Danube, and because Russia had failed to keep these mouths open—to the injury and destruction of the Hungarian and Moldo-Wallachian corn trade, and to the advantage, therefore, of the Russian corn trade and of Odessa.

No humiliation was intended towards Russia, and it was expressly set forth in the treaty that the cession of territory was stipulated for in order that the mouths of the Danube might be kept open ; with which object the river was placed under the care of a European commission.

But Russia felt mortified ; and at the Conference of Paris, Prince Gortchakoff, present as one of the representatives of Russia, abstained from putting his name to the treaty because in the post he was about to assume—that

of Minister of Foreign Affairs—he had resolved to make it the work of his life to destroy two most obnoxious clauses in the treaty: the clause neutralising the Black Sea, and the clause ceding the Black Sea districts of Bessarabia to Moldavia. This interesting and important fact is recorded with some emphasis in the *Étude Diplomatique sur la Guerre de Crimée*, issued by the Russian Foreign Office and attributed to Baron Jomini.

In the series of *Acts and Documents*, published in 1893 by the Roumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Kogolniceano, in reference to the Roumanian War of Independence (1877–1878) a conversation between General Ignatieff and an unnamed Roumanian diplomatist is recorded which shows the view entertained by the Emperor, Alexander II., both as to the freedom of the Black Sea and the cession of Bessarabia.

“Seven years ago,” writes the Roumanian diplomatist, “General Ignatieff said to me that in the Treaty of Paris there were two blots on the life of Alexander II.—the neutralisation of the Black Sea and Bessarabia; and that the Emperor considered himself bound in honour to efface them before his death. Later, when the question of the Black Sea had been disposed of, General Ignatieff said to me, that everything between us had now been arranged and that we could henceforth live on friendly terms. I reminded him of what he had previously said about Bessarabia.

“‘Yes,’ he replied; ‘let us forget it! Let us say nothing about it!’”

The Roumanians, however, bore well in mind the fact that Russia wanted back the piece of Bessarabian territory on the Black Sea which she had been required to cede to Moldavia after the Crimean War; and they accordingly stipulated in the formal convention, signed with Russia when the Russians proposed, in 1877, to pass through

Roumania towards the invasion of Turkey, that, whatever might happen, the independence and integrity of Roumania should not be interfered with.

"That no inconvenience and no danger may be caused to Roumania," ran the clause dealing with this point, "by the passage of Russian troops through her territory, the government of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, binds himself to maintain and cause to be respected the political rights of the Roumanian State as established by internal laws and by existing treaties; also to maintain and defend the actual integrity of Roumania."

This was explicit enough, and that there should be no possibility of any misunderstanding about it, the Roumanian Government published the convention in the official journal of Bucharest. M. Kogolniceano, Roumanian Foreign Minister at the time, called attention to it, moreover, at every opportunity until at last Baron Stuart, Russian Diplomatic Agent at Bucharest, showed some irritation and said that to doubt the Emperor's words was "an offence to His Majesty."

The Roumanian Government continued then to hope—but with serious misgivings—that the Emperor would keep his word. While taking certain precautions for the defence of their territory, the Roumanians did not engage in hostilities against Turkey until one day a message was received by Prince Charles from the Grand-Duke Nicholas telling him of the critical position of affairs before Plevna, declaring that "Christendom was in danger," and calling upon him with or without conditions to hasten at once to the assistance of the Faithful.

Prince Charles did not hesitate. He marched with an army of fifty thousand men to the point where help was so urgently needed; and before the combined attack of Roumanians and Russians the Plevna fortress fell. A

year afterwards the Grand-Duke Nicholas, mindful of the services rendered by Prince Charles, sent him the following telegram :

"Bobran, 28 September, 1878. Anniversary of the memorable day of the battles beneath Plevna, where our two armies for the first time fought together under your orders and in conjunction took the first redoubt of Gravitza. Cannot help testifying to you once more my gratitude for all the time during which I had the honour of having your young army under my command, which showed itself worthy of its young prince who himself led it for the first time to its baptism of iron. Allow me, your old friend, to embrace you and Elizabeth also with all my heart. My compliments to all who remember me."

The Grand-Duke Nicholas had been unable meanwhile to admit Prince Charles to the negotiations on the subject of peace ; explaining to him that he himself took no active part in them but was obliged to receive all his instructions from St. Petersburg. The Treaty of San Stefano gave back Roumanian Bessarabia to Russia, the Dobrudja being made over to Roumania by way of compensation. Roumania, meanwhile, had not been in any way consulted about this retrocession, which was obtained direct from Turkey—still Roumania's suzerain, but not the owner of her soil.

It was necessary to ignore Roumania in the matter, it being known beforehand that she would never consent to such an act of spoliation which was, moreover, an absolute violation of the Russo-Roumanian convention.

The time having arrived for the Russian Government to break the news delicately but seriously to Roumania that the convention on the subject of her integrity had been set at nought, Baron Jomini took up his best pen and addressed to the Roumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs a long homily on the merits and advantages of

acting in good faith, as illustrated by a striking example of the contrary practice, borrowed substantially from his own *Étude Diplomatique sur la Guerre de Crimée*.

Here is the Baron's first epistle to the Roumanians.<sup>1</sup>

"ST. PETERSBURG,

"Jan. 17, 1878.

"I received with much pleasure the telegram from your Excellency on the occasion of the 1st of January, and I was deeply touched by this mark of your friendly recollection. I beg you to accept all my thanks, and to believe in my sincere wishes that the year just beginning may bring you all possible kinds of prosperity. Amongst these wishes I form one that you may succeed in maintaining and consolidating the good relations which have been established between Roumania and Russia, and which have been cemented on fields of battle. Many temptations will assail you, and crafty endeavours will be made to persuade you that in politics perfidy is cleverness. Do not believe it. Straightforwardness, good sense, and reason are the best and surest guides; my experience of forty years has given me this conviction. This is above all applicable to nations. Individuals may sometimes find an advantage in duplicity; but men pass and nations remain. Politics are like whist—what one side gains the other side loses; and the losing side desires its revenge. That is what statesmen entrusted with the fate of nations too often forget. When this desire for revenge is inspired in a neighbouring and powerful state, in a state to which much is due for the past, and from which there is nothing to fear in the future—since it is great enough to have no feeling of covetousness, and strong enough not to be in a position to desire compensations—then a great fault is committed; for a friend is lost and an enemy created. And this fault is greater still when, like you, one is surrounded by perils.

"History is full of testimonies to this truth. Take the example of Austria in /54. Admiration has been expressed for the Machiavellian cleverness of Count Buol, who, without firing a shot, turned us out of the Principalities, condemning us to an impossible defensive

<sup>1</sup> *Actes et Documents*, vol. i., p. 10. Bucharest, 1893.

attitude, and finally detaching us from the Danube by depriving us of a province.

"Now what came of it all? Three years after the peace Austria lost Lombardy, and, ten years later, her whole position in Germany. God preserve Roumania from such cleverness as that! Do not, moreover, allow yourself to be deceived by the humbug<sup>1</sup> of neutrality. That of Belgium which is preached to you as a model does not rest at all on treaties, which in our days are, alas! but scraps of paper. It is guaranteed by the powerful interest of England, her neighbour, not to allow a great Power to establish itself at Antwerp.

"In the same way the best guarantee of your neutrality, and, above all, of your independence, is the friendship of Russia, and the interest she has in so high a degree to insure your co-operation in order to maintain the work of emancipation she is at this moment accomplishing, in case her position should be threatened. Forgive me these political digressions. I conclude by asking a favour. Having received from H.M. the Emperor his authorisation to accept the decoration which you have sent me on the part of Prince Charles, I beg you to be kind enough to express to his Highness my profound gratitude.

"Accept, Excellency, the homage of all my respects,

"JOMINI."

The meaning of Baron Jomini's political "digressions" was that he advised Roumania to accept willingly the retrocession of Bessarabia, and to remain on the best terms with Russia in case the Western Powers should wish to impede that Power in her "work of emancipation." What Russia at this time wanted was not only Bessarabia, but also the right of march through the Dobrudja (about to be made a Roumanian possession) into Bulgaria; a continuous military line, that is to say, from the newly acquired Bessarabia to the environs of Adrianople.

A daring programme, which, however, was to be substantially torn up at the Conference of Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> Writing in French, Baron Jomini introduces this word in English.

The Roumanian Government, in reply, took its stand on the Emperor Alexander's promise to respect the integrity of Roumania ; and General Prince Ghika, the Russian Diplomatic Agent at St. Petersburg, was instructed to remain firm, and to ascertain from Prince Gortchakoff whether the decision of the Russian Government was unchangeable on the subject of Bessarabia.

"Prince Gortchakoff," wrote General Ghika in reply, "says that in spite of all our clamour at home and abroad Russia's intention will be carried out ; that he will not introduce the question at the sittings of the Congress because it would be humiliating to the Emperor ; that if another Power wished to do so he would not agree to it ; that he wishes to treat with us alone ; that if he cannot make us give way he will take Bessarabia by force ; and that if we should resist by arms such resistance would be fatal to Roumania. Nevertheless, we can neither treat nor give way. I am now preparing a reply to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg which I hope to be able to send you to-morrow.<sup>1</sup>

On hearing that Russia would not allow the question of Bessarabia to be brought before the Conference of Berlin, M. Balaceano, Roumanian Diplomatic Agent at Vienna, telegraphed to his Government at Bucharest :

"The Russian Government is in error. . . . The Bessarabian Question will come before the Conference or there will be no Conference ; in which case there will be war."

It is now said that if the Roumanians had consented to treat in a direct manner with Russia, they could have had magnificent terms, including a large war indemnity and much additional territory. But the whole feeling of the country was against the cession, and no minister would have dared to propose it.

<sup>1</sup> *Actes et Documents*, etc., vol. i., p. 54. Bucharest, 1893.



Prince Bismarck sent several times to Bucharest urging the Roumanians to give way, and assuring them that they would have to do so in the end ; but without effect.

When Prince Bismarck brought the matter before the Conference he did so in such an emphatic manner that the cession was at once voted. Russia would have to give way on so many other points that on this one it was thought desirable to meet her wishes. The two Powers most likely to take a just view of the matter, France and England, agreed reluctantly and almost under protest to the retrocession of Bessarabia. M. Waddington remarked that Roumania was being treated "rather hardly," and Lord Beaconsfield in giving his consent said he did so "with regret."

When at last Roumania was formally called upon by the Russian Agent at Bucharest to make over the territory which as one of the conditions of her independence the Conference had summoned her to give up, she still refused until the authorisation of the Roumanian Parliament should have been obtained. The cession was of course voted. What had been refused to Russian dictation was accorded to the representations of the European Powers.

But the exactions of Russia were not yet at an end, and once more an attempt was made to bully Roumania into subservience. The rude messages on these occasions were sent by Prince Gortchakoff ; the polite ones, modifying in some degree the offensiveness of his chief, by the always amiable Baron Jomini.

In addition to the Bessarabian districts on the Black Sea, Russia acquired by Article 8 of the Treaty of San Stefano the right of marching troops during a period of two years through Roumania into Bulgaria ; which, as before said, would have enabled the Russians to keep up

a direct line of military communication between Russia and Bulgaria—the Bulgaria of the San Stefano Treaty extending in one direction to the neighbourhood of Adrianople, in another to the shores of the Ægean.

The Roumanians objected strongly to the right of march through Roumania, feeling that the two years' occupation might easily degenerate into a permanent one

Informed of this, Prince Gortchakoff sent for General Ghika, and on his arrival said to him :

“Is it true that your Government means to protest against the eighth article of the Treaty of San Stefano which reserves to the Army of Bulgaria its communications with Russia through Roumania? If the Emperor, already ill-disposed towards you on account of your attitude on the Bessarabian Question, learnt that any such declaration had been made he would lose all patience. He has commissioned me to tell you, for communication to your Government, that if you have any intention of protesting against or of opposing the Article in question he will have Roumania occupied and the Roumanian Army disarmed.”

General Ghika expressed his astonishment at receiving such a message, and promised to communicate at once with his Government ; who replied, that an arrangement made with Turkey could not be binding on Roumania, and, in regard to Prince Gortchakoff's threats, “that the Roumanian Army might be crushed, but would never allow itself to be disarmed.”

Prince Gortchakoff in his Babylonian haughtiness had now made two mistakes, by which Roumania with her skilful and courageous diplomacy was not slow to profit. He had previously declared that Russia would not allow the Bessarabian Question to be brought before the Conference ; and he now threatened that if Roumania objected to the continued passage of Russian troops

during a period of two years through Roumania and the Dobrudja he would occupy Roumania and disarm the Roumanian Army.

By telegraphing to their diplomatic agents in the chief European capitals, the Roumanian Government ascertained that Russia would be obliged, if peace was to be preserved, to submit the Bessarabian Question to the Conference ; and they now learned that Roumania would be supported in her refusal to recognise the two years' right of march claimed by Russia through Roumania and the Dobrudja. The Roumanians, however, had taken up their ground boldly from the first without knowing on either point whether they would be supported or not.

The insulting threat not merely to attack and possibly vanquish the Roumanian Army, but to "disarm" it, did not leave the valiant Prince Charles unmoved. He sent for the Russian Agent, Baron Stuart, to the Palace and in reference to Prince Gortchakoff's menaces said to him :

"Russia must not forget that there is a Hohenzollern on the throne of Roumania, and that he commands an army which will do its duty towards the throne and towards the country."

A circular despatch from M. Kogolniceano to the Roumanian Diplomatic Agents, reporting the interview between Prince Charles and the Russian Diplomatic Agent, ended with these words: "Measures are being taken for rendering the menaced attack a costly one to its authors."

Prince Gortchakoff, having threatened not only to seize Bessarabia, but in case of resistance to take possession of all Roumania, Baron Jomini wrote to General Ghika, explaining that "His Majesty's intentions would only be carried out in case of certain eventualities," and

recommending him to telegraph at once to Bucharest desiring that "*nothing* should be done until his return."

Baron Jomini, however, could not with such a chief keep up his conciliatory attitude very long; and, in answer to a request from General Ghika for an audience from Prince Gortchakoff, he wrote that "the Prince Chancellor was so much occupied that it was quite impossible for him to make an appointment. His Highness," continued the latter, "begs you to send your communication to M. de Giers, who in due time will inform you of the answer, should there be one."

This was extremely discourteous; but all talk about occupying Roumania and disarming its brave troops was at an end.

Prince Gortchakoff wished now to escape from the awkward position in which he had placed himself by his declaration that he would never allow the Bessarabian Question to be brought before the Conference. News of this declaration had at once been flashed by General Ghika from St. Petersburg to Bucharest, and by M. Kogolniceano from Bucharest to all the European capitals. Prince Gortchakoff heard of it on all sides, and was enraged. It was the insolence of the Roumanian diplomats in taking advantage of his declaration and wiring it all over Europe that above all excited his wrath. He had evidently intended General Ghika and his government to keep it to themselves. He now informed General Ghika that he did not recollect saying anything of the kind; when the Roumanian Agent assured him in return that he had made a note of the conversation immediately afterwards, and had at once despatched its substance to Bucharest.

M. Novikoff, too, at Vienna was instructed to deny the reports circulated by the Roumanians as to Prince

Gortchakoff's threats, which, said M. Novikoff, "had been invented by the Roumanian Government in order to raise up a feeling in Europe against Russia."

"This accusation," wrote M. Kogolniceano to the agent at Vienna, "is a very grave one. I therefore declare to you, and I beg you to declare on your side that, according to an official despatch from General Ghika, Prince Gortchakoff threatened to occupy the country on a more extended scale, and to disarm the Roumanian Army in case we protested against Article 8 of the Treaty of San Stefano. I will send you a copy of this despatch and of a letter which Jomini afterwards addressed to General Ghika, in order to attenuate a little the effect of the threats."

M. de Giers, too, had an interview with General Ghika on the subject of Prince Gortchakoff's menaces, in which the future Foreign Minister made some curious suggestions as to the possible significance and value of diplomatic language.

"Prince Gortchakoff did not," said M. de Giers, "wish to deny General Ghika's assertions. But His Highness," he continued, "may have used words which do not quite express his thoughts, or which are contrary to them" ("des mots qui rendent mal ses pensées ou qui leur sont contraires").<sup>1</sup>

Finding that the Roumanians persisted in their protest against the Russian Convention with Turkey authorising the passage of Russian troops through Roumania, Prince Gortchakoff sent a special agent to Bucharest in order to conclude a new convention with Roumania herself.

But the Roumanians still argued that a two years' occupation might easily become a permanent one. Nor could any Government retain power in Roumania which consented to such a humiliation. They continued there-

<sup>1</sup> *Actes et Documents*, vol. i., p. 105. Bucharest, 1893.

fore to protest; and they were saved some natural anxiety on this head through being informed at Vienna by Count Andrassy on the part of Austria-Hungary, and by Sir Henry Elliot on the part of England, that neither of these Powers would consent to Russia's being allowed a military passage through Roumania. M. Balaceano, the Roumanian Agent at Vienna, was struck by the fact that the assurances on this point given to him by Count Andrassy and Sir Henry Elliot were in almost identical language.

Ultimately Russia had to give way in regard to the military communications between Russia and Bulgaria through Roumania. The right of passage, however, was authorised by the Conference for a single year. Roumania, at the same time, by decision of the Conference, and as one of the conditions of her independence, surrendered to Russia that portion of Bessarabia on the Black Sea coast which had been detached from Russia and annexed to Moldavia by the Treaty of Paris; receiving by way of compensation the Dobrudja. Prince Bismarck is known to have settled the Bessarabian matter by a few emphatic words in which he pointed out, besides other reasons, that Russia, victorious in her recent campaign, felt deeply on that particular point and that her feelings ought to be respected.

Not so the feelings of Roumania, who had also been victorious and, moreover, had saved Russia from defeat. But great Powers feel more strongly than small ones.

It was in connection with the Bessarabian Question alone that Prince Bismarck justified a boast he had recently made to the effect that *he* was the Conference.

Before the Conference assembled the Roumanian agent at Berlin, M. Varnac, wrote, April 23, 1878, to Bucharest that, in the course of a conversation he had had the night

before with Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador had said that up to the present time, Prince Bismarck had done nothing in connection with the Eastern Question but utter *mots*.

"He has just made one," added Lord Odo, "which surpasses all the others." In memory of Louis XIV. he said just as he was starting for the country, "Le congrès c'est moi!"

"I replied that I had read a few days before, in the *Débats* an article which cited all the Chancellor's *bons mots* in reference to the Eastern Question and showed that not one of them had hit the mark. I added that I hoped the latest would have the same fate as the others, and that England also would be the Congress."

"England will be listened to or there will be war," said the Ambassador. "But I think," he added, "that things will be arranged pacifically and that they will end well for you and for all Europe."

Like so many great men, Prince Bismarck suffered at times from what is called in the language of science "megalomania," and in American slang, "swelled head." If at the Conference at Berlin he made himself the mouthpiece of Russia and claimed for her the retrocession of Bessarabia, he did so because he knew that Alexander II. had declared that he regarded the loss of Bessarabia as one of the two "blots" on his reign which he was bound to efface. Prince Gortchakoff wiped out one of them when, towards the end of the Franco-German War, he procured by the Treaty of London the abolition of the clause in the Treaty of Paris forbidding Russia, equally with Turkey, to build ships on the Black Sea. Yet Prince Bismarck ended by persuading himself that the idea of destroying the neutralisation clause was his own particular conception originated at a critical moment

in order to render it impossible for England to come diplomatically or otherwise to the aid of her Crimean ally.

Prince Gortchakoff, however, could have said with truth that the destruction of the Black Sea clause was the object held immediately in view by Russia from the very beginning of the Franco-German War, and that Prussia's assistance towards that end was the price paid for Russia's more than benevolent neutrality at the outset of the campaign, when the attitude of Austria was still uncertain.

On being sent to Bucharest, Mr. White as we have seen had been instructed among other things to do all he fairly could to encourage "the plucky attitude of Roumania." This attitude, approved equally by France and by England, had inspired him with sympathy and admiration when he was still at Belgrade. The only service he could render to the Roumanians he certainly did render, by keeping his Government fully informed as to their perilous situation ; in which their attitude was more than "plucky": it was heroic.



## CHAPTER X

### ROUMANIA AND THE JEWS

THE trials of Roumania were far from being at an end. In recognising Roumanian independence the Conference had stipulated as a condition that Roumanian Jews should be admitted to the same rights as Roumanians in general. This stipulation filled the Roumanians with dismay ; and the reply made by the Government, the Parliament, and the people was succinctly that there was no such thing as a "Roumanian Jew," and that, to require the admission of three hundred thousand foreigners (four hundred thousand, according to some estimates) of the same race and religion to the rights of Roumanian citizens with whom they had nothing in common—neither language, nor traditions, nor sympathy, nor aspirations—was to demand an injustice and an impossibility.

"Better go on paying tribute to the Turks," wrote M. Kogolniceano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, when he first heard of the conditions on which Roumanian independence was to be recognised.

"Better make terms with Russia than have the Jews imposed upon us," said to me, some time later, another Roumanian Minister.

No foreigner had ever acquired Roumanian nationality by simply "giving himself the trouble to be born" in Roumania. The rights of Roumanian citizenship were only for Roumanians of Roumanian blood ; and it had

always been made an object of the first importance to preserve the purity of the race, since Roumania was surrounded and frequently traversed by populations of the most diverse origins.

In 1848, when Moldavia and Wallachia were occupied by a combined Russian and Turkish Army, Count Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister of those days, sent out a circular in which, by way of destroying all claims on the part of Roumanians to serious consideration, he declared that their national origin had been "lost in the night of ages."<sup>1</sup>

After his arrival then at Bucharest, one of Mr. White's first and most important duties was to study the Jewish Question and report upon it to his Government; and without allowing himself to be misled by the usual commonplaces on the subject of religious equality, he at once saw how important it was for Roumania, hemmed in by dangerous enemies, to entrust her Government exclusively to Roumanians.

He showed that Roumanian nationality had never been acquired by the accident of being born on Roumanian territory, nor even by prolonged residence in the country; and that, except in cases of special service to the community or to the Government, it had always been confined to persons of Roumanian blood. The Jews were excluded from Roumanian citizenship less as Jews than as aliens; just as Ottomans were excluded less as Mahometans than as Turks.

Mr. White's views on this point were partly set forth in the following letter to the Marquess of Salisbury:

"MY LORD,

"With reference to the programme for the solution of the Jewish Question, taking special categories as a basis,

<sup>1</sup> *Actes et Documents*, etc. Bucharest, 1893.

and including a qualification depending on taxation of urban property, the objection made by public men here rests on the results to which it would lead in many of the towns of Moldavia, where persons of the Jewish creed constitute one half of the population.

"Some data on this subject accompany my despatch of the 28 March of this year to your Lordship, and it appears from statistical returns, that, out of one hundred births in the districts there referred to 47½ per cent. were of Jewish children.

"It is asserted that the admission of so many persons of that creed at Jassy and other boroughs to the franchise, would inevitably lead to the return to the Roumanian Chambers of members linked together by the tie of a community of creed and race, who, though not numerous, would hold in comparatively small assemblies a position somewhat similar, but in reality much more prejudicial to that occupied by the Home Rule faction in the House of Commons. And there is evidence that the feeling against any proposal likely to modify the electoral registration in Moldavia in this sense is so intense that the objections to extending the categories so as to include the qualifications under Sections 6 and 7 of the memorandums appear insurmountable.

"This has become still more apparent since two of the leading Bucharest journals, the *Roumania Libera* and the *Bien Public* have printed the programme, inclusive of these two categories, so as to irritate and prejudice the public mind against the ministerial scheme."

In regard to the Bessarabian Question an attempt was now made to cause a false impression in the minds of the representatives assembled at Berlin by spreading reports as to the non-Roumanian character of the Bessarabian districts of which Russia demanded the retrocession. It is recorded in the Roumanian *Acts and Documents* that one of the German delegates, Herr von Bülow, asked a Roumanian diplomatist "with a smile" whether it was true that when in 1812 the districts in question passed for the first time into the hands of Russia, they were "inhabited by wandering tribes."

Besides being seriously menaced by Russia, the Roumanian Government was a good deal annoyed during the period that followed the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano by the arrogance of the Russian Diplomatic Agent at Bucharest, Baron Stuart.

To celebrate the making of peace, he took upon himself to order a *Te Deum* in one of the Roumanian churches, and at the last moment—twelve o'clock on the night before the appointed thanksgiving service, invited M. Bratiano to attend.

M. Bratiano replied that Baron Stuart had taken a great liberty in ordering a thanksgiving service in the capital of the foreign country to which he was accredited ; and that Roumania, which had not been consulted about the conditions of peace, and which strongly objected to many of them, had nothing to return thanks for.

The liveliness of the situation in the Balkan Peninsula had been much increased by the creation of the Principality of Bulgaria ; which, though its territory had been diminished at Berlin by about two-thirds, was none the less in want of a prince ; for, whatever satirical poets and cynical philosophers may say to the contrary, a crown, even in the Balkan Peninsula, is still a most attractive object.

Bismarck had told Prince Charles of Hohenzollern in 1866, when he was hesitating whether or not to ascend the throne of Roumania, that to have reigned even for a short time in that apparently unstable land would always be "a souvenir for his old age."

To begin the monarchical career, even as a vassal prince in what the late Lord Strangford used to call "the E.C. district of Europe," was sufficiently tempting ; for the vassal might become independent and the prince a king.

The candidates for the throne of Bulgaria were only too numerous. Members of the great reigning houses were excluded from the competition ; and it was tolerably certain that the actual rulers of the various Balkan States, each anxious for an increase of power, would not be encouraged. Prince Nikita, of Montenegro, however, was ready to mount the untrodden steps of the Bulgarian throne ; and equally so were Prince Milan, of Servia, and even Prince Charles, of Roumania. Never would the Russians have accepted Prince Charles, of Roumania, already chief of the one powerful state in the Balkan Peninsula.

It was rumoured, indeed, that they would possibly force Prince Charles to abdicate and then seize and annex the whole of Moldavia, as they had already taken possession of that much-coverted corner of Moldavian territory on the Black Sea.

Bratiano, the eminent Roumanian statesman, had assured Sir Henry Layard at Constantinople (who communicated the information by letter to Sir William White) that " the existence of his country was threatened," though whether by Austria or by Russia he could not say. Possible the menace came from Russia and Austria simultaneously if not in combination ; one to take Moldavia, the other Wallachia.

Meanwhile, England had engaged to back up France on the Jewish Question ; and Germany was with them both.

Italy was less pronounced in regard to the Jews than the three Western Powers ; but she gave them her support.

Austria cared very little for the Jews ; Russia nothing ; Turkey less than nothing.

As for the Bessarabian territory on the Black Sea,

Russia had sworn to retake it, and every one knew she would somehow get hold of it.

There was also the railway bill which Prince Bismarck wished the Roumanian Chambers to pass in an amended form, so as to give special advantages to German shareholders and German directors; and it was well understood that though there was nothing about this in the Berlin Treaty, it would be necessary all the same to carry out Prince Bismarck's wishes.

To avoid, then, all chance of being partitioned, and to enjoy the honour of no longer being considered a vassal state, which, as a matter of fact, she had ceased to be, Roumania had to make concessions to the Jews, to give up Roumanian Bessarabia to the Russians (in exchange for the Dobrudja), and to let the man of iron have his own iron way about the iron road.

## CHAPTER XI

### ROUMANIA IN 1878

TOWARDS the end of 1878, Sir Henry Elliot received many inquiries from the Roumanian Agent in the Austrian capital, M. Balaceano, as to whether and when his government would recognise the Independence of Roumania. There was of course only one answer: "As soon as Roumania executes the conditions of the Treaty of Berlin."

"When I was at Berlin," wrote Sir Henry Elliot to Mr. White, "I asked Lord — whether it was intended that if Roumania did not fulfil the conditions she should be considered as still under the suzerainty of the Sultan; but I got no very distinct answer."

The question put by Sir Henry Elliot was indeed a poser. What a grotesque situation would have been created if England and the other Powers had insisted on regarding Roumania as still under the suzerainty of the Sultan when the Sultan had already surrendered his suzerain rights! Roumania was *de facto* independent from the moment that her independence was recognised by the Porte.

Soon afterwards the Roumanian Agent at Vienna consulted Sir Henry Elliot about a matter of more pressing and more substantial importance than even the recognition of Roumanian independence.

"Two days ago," wrote Sir Henry Elliot (Nov. 3, 1878), to Mr. White, "Balaceano asked me whether the conclusion of a Convention allowing Russia passage for her troops through the Dobrudja, would be contrary to the Treaty of Berlin. I told him that whether it would be regarded as an active violation of the Treaty or not, the Powers which decided on the Dobrudja being made over to Roumania had certainly not intended that it should become practically Russian territory for military purposes. I added also that if in the spring we should be involved in hostilities with Russia on questions arising out of the Treaty of Berlin, and found that Russian troops and supplies were allowed free passage through Roumanian territory, I believed H.M. Government would feel justified in taking any steps towards the Principality that our interests might seem to call for. If it suited us to look upon Roumania as an ally of our enemy for affording those facilities, she must be prepared for the consequences. I gather from Balaceano that some of the ministers are inclined to yield to the Russian demand, and I thought it might be useful to say very openly that they would run the risk of finding themselves in hot water with us."

Sir Henry Elliot now wrote to Lord Salisbury about the Russian demand, and informed Mr. White of what he had done in the following letter :

"PESTH,  
"Nov. 17, 1878.

"DEAR MR. WHITE,

"I send you the copy of despatch to Lord Salisbury about the Military Convention. Nothing can be more satisfactory than Count Andrassy's language ; and Balaceano, whom I saw this evening, is delighted. It seems to me an impossibility that the Russians can insist ; and there is nothing that the Roumanians need be frightened about, for the immediate possession of the Dobrudja is not a matter of life and death to them ; so that I hope they will turn a deaf ear to all the invitations of their troublesome neighbour.

"Yours sincerely,  
"HENRY ELLIOT."



In the *Acts and Documents* relating to the Roumanian War of Independence, published by the Roumanian Foreign Office, it is interesting to read a letter from Mr. Balaceano which is in exact accordance with the above letters from Sir Henry Elliot. The Roumanian Diplomatic Agent at Vienna was much struck by the fact that Count Andrassy and Sir Henry Elliot told him in almost identical terms that Roumania might meet the Russian demand with a direct refusal, and that, whether she refused or not, the desired right of march through the Dobrudja would not be permitted.

In the autumn of 1878 Mr. White was still without credentials, and uncertain as to what rank would be definitely assigned to him in connection with his new appointment. Roumania, however, was sure eventually to be acknowledged as an independent kingdom; and the representative now sent to the Roumanian Court by Austria, held the rank of "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary."

On August 22, Sir Henry Elliot wrote to Mr. White in these terms:

"I telegraphed yesterday to Lord Salisbury at the same time as to you, saying that Count Hojos was going to be sent from here to Bucharest with the rank of Envoy, which he already had been holding at Washington; and as I cannot for a moment suppose that there can be any hesitation about giving you a position equal to that of your colleague, I hope soon to be able to congratulate you upon an appointment of the same rank. Gould probably told you, as he did me, that Lord Salisbury was thinking of deferring his nomination till the passing of the law establishing full religious equality in Servia, which is one of the conditions on which the independence of the two Principalities was to be acknowledged. But I am not aware whether he proposed to follow the same course towards Roumania.

In any case, Count Andrassy does not appear disposed to do so; and I expect Count Hojos' appointment to be made very soon."

"I should be very glad," added Sir Henry, "if I could think there was any chance of a modification in favour of Roumania being made in the Dobrudja frontier as decided at Berlin; but there is little likelihood that Russia would agree to one. I should have liked to see Silistria left to Roumania, and the line drawn from there to Baltchik, but nothing of the sort is now possible. The retrocession of Bessarabia is a bad job for Europe, as well as for Roumania.

"But I cannot, for the life of me, expend an ounce of pity on the Prince or his Government for having to give it up, as they knew from the very first they would have to do so, and they were perfectly well known to be ready to give that or almost anything else for the sake of the independence that they were aiming at. They could not be expected to try to resist Russia or to side with the Porte. But by maintaining a neutrality they would have acquired a claim to the consideration of the Powers, which they chose to sacrifice by taking part in the War; and their proclamation of their independence put them entirely out of court as regards any appeal to the treaties. The only matter on which I think the Roumanians have a right to feel sore is that all the European Governments should have lent their weight to Russia in obliging them to give way, by making the recognition of the independence of the Principality conditional upon the cession demanded by their inconvenient ally. This was certainly going further than I liked to see in supporting a detestable act of spoliation, and it may well make the Roumanians feel sore.

"The Austrian Government are disposed to be very conciliatory towards the Roumanians; and, as we no doubt shall wish to be the same, the two Governments ought to be able to pull well together.

"Yours sincerely,  
"HENRY ELLIOT."

Sir Henry Elliot took a genuine interest in the Jewish Question, and though the Government to which he was accredited cared little or nothing about it, he wrote

frequently to Mr. White for information with respect to the disabilities weighing upon the Jews of Roumania, and the various means of relief proposed.

The Roumanian dialectics on the subject were, however, difficult to follow ; and the paradoxical declaration that there was not, never had been, and never could be, a "Roumanian Jew," and that the term was an illogical name for an inconceivable thing must have stopped many a student at the very threshold of the inquiry.

To Mr. White belongs the honour of having explained to the Western mind, that, though it was in the very remotest degree possible that a Roumanian might become a Jew, yet that it was quite impossible for a Jew to become a Roumanian.

In a despatch on this subject to Lord Salisbury, Mr. White set forth that by the ancient laws of the country those only were Roumanians who could establish their Roumanian descent ; children born in Roumania of foreign parents not being Roumanians unless in virtue of special letters of naturalisation.

A commission of Roumanian deputies, appointed to study and report on the Jewish Question, made in the first article of their report the following statement :

"Roumanian Jews have never existed, but only indigenous Jews ; that is to say, born in Roumania without, for that reason, resembling Roumanians either by language, manners and customs, or aspirations."

The Commission declared, moreover, that the simple fact of having been born on Roumanian territory had never, according to the most ancient laws and traditions, conferred in itself Roumanian nationality ; "and the case," it added, "remains the same even when birth has been followed by permanent domicile or long residence ; this

principle having been adopted and maintained for national reasons alone, and in no way through feelings of religious intolerance."

Placed in the way of Tartars, Turks, Slavonians, Magyars, Gipsies, and Jews, the Roumanians, unless by rigid means they guarded the preservation of their own nationality, did indeed run the risk of being swamped by the influx of foreign races.

The Commission recommended, however, that naturalisation should be accorded to all foreigners applying for it, apart from religious considerations ; but always individually and in each case by a special legislative act.

Count Andrassy, who knew from his own experience in Austria and Hungary by what difficulties the Jewish Question was surrounded, thought the Roumanians were doing all that could be expected of them ; and this opinion he communicated to Sir Henry Elliot at Vienna.

Among the letters addressed to Mr. White at Bucharest, those of Sir Henry Elliot were very numerous ; and during the autumn and winter of 1878 the British Ambassador at Vienna was certainly not suffering from the malady described by Sir Robert Morier as "graphophobia."

"The German Ambassador," he wrote (February 16, 1879), "is very hostile to Roumania in his language, and has told the Austrians that his Government do not recognise the right of Prince Charles's Government to make any claim in virtue of the Treaty of Berlin, till they have themselves fulfilled the conditions laid on them by the Congress. The different Governments have shown themselves ignorant of the difficulties that surround the Jewish Question ; but the Roumanians cannot be acquitted of having allowed much time to pass without taking a step to put themselves in the right ; and they now feel the ill effects of their hesitation."

The Roumanians had decided from the first not to

place their three hundred thousand Jews (born as regards a large majority beyond the Roumanian frontiers) on an equality with Roumanians of Roumanian blood; and by the spring of 1879 Lord Salisbury seems to have been much troubled by their obvious unwillingness to comply with Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty. Bismarck did not regard their concessions as at all adequate; while M. Waddington, from whom, as from Prince Bismarck, Lord Salisbury was most unwilling to separate himself, thought the treatment of the Jewish Question by the Roumanians "unworthy of them and of the Treaty."

"The present state of the Roumano-Jewish Question," wrote Lord Salisbury to Mr. White (March 12, 1879), "is unsatisfactory enough. I gather from your last despatches that even the admission of native born Jews is more than can be expected of the Roumanian legislature, while it is certainly the very least the Berlin Treaty can be held to mean. Neither Paris nor Berlin can be moved a hair's breadth lower than that; indeed, Bismarck can scarcely be induced to go so low. To emphasise his hatred of Roumania the more clearly, he has recently proposed to recognise Servia. We have consented, but have explicitly reserved to ourselves liberty to recognise Roumania as soon as she has placed herself in the position which Servia now occupies. Whether we shall do so or not must depend certainly on the question whether there is any fair probability of the legislative assembly acting up to the stipulations of the Treaty.

"Your credentials as Minister Plenipotentiary go out by this messenger, so that you may be ready to present them when we telegraph to that effect."

As it was impossible to force the Roumanian Chambers to adopt a legislation contrary to the interests and quite out of harmony with the feelings of the nation, Mr. White's credentials had to remain in his drawer unrepresented for another year.

Meanwhile, Lord Salisbury continued to write to him about the eternal, insoluble Jewish Question. He was animated by the best wishes towards the new kingdom. But at Berlin he had been fortunate enough, in opposition to all probability, to secure the support on vital questions at once of France and of Germany, and he now felt bound to conform as much as possible to the wishes of those two Powers: to let Bismarck have his own way about the railway job, and France hers about the Jews.

For several months the great danger against which the English Government had to guard was that Russia should be able to divide the other Powers. If she had succeeded in doing so she would not have left the Balkan Peninsula peaceably. Therefore, it was of importance to keep well with Germany and France—and especially France; and both these Powers for some reason or other thought fit to attach a special importance to the Jewish Question. It was more necessary to keep the line unbroken in face of Russia than to conciliate the people of Roumania.

"My dear Mr. White," wrote Lord Salisbury on this very point (December 4, 1879), "I can but offer you my commiseration at the part we are compelled to assign to you. In most games of chess some piece has to be sacrificed; and you are the selected victim in this case."

"Bismarck has behaved very well to us about Egypt, and very fairly about Turkey and the Balkan Peninsula; and he has a right to claim our acquiescence in a matter which is less essential to our interests. I have no doubt that—balancing losses and gains—it is our policy to humour him in this Roumanian matter. But I am not surprised that you should ardently wish to bring this unpleasant state of transition to a close."

"It is a melancholy conclusion to come to," wrote an eminent diplomatist to Mr. White about this time,

"but I believe it to be sound—that none of the greater Powers take Roumania as serious. They look upon it as good exercising-ground for the autumn manœuvres of diplomacy," continues the writer; "but they think, or at least act, as if they thought the present state of things not permanent. What each of them expects to see take its place I have no means of guessing. Bismarck in his curiously frank conversation treated it as a mystery and a puzzle; but the story which went the round of the papers, that he recommended Prince Alexander to accept Bulgaria 'as a souvenir for his old age,' was really true of Prince Charles of Roumania—at least, B. told me so at Berlin. All his conduct looks like it, he cannot really believe in the permanence of a nation he treats in such a fashion.

"The same listless feeling seems in their several ways to prevail in both Austrian and Russian policy when Roumania is in question. But what do they contemplate doing with her? I do not pretend to guess. But in the present state of Europe the Roumanians must, I fear, accustom their palates to the occasional taste of humble pie."

Meanwhile Mr. White endeavoured to see things from the Roumanian standpoint, so as at least to be able to understand them; and his despatches on the various questions which had to be decided before the independence of Roumania could be recognised are full of explanations as to this view and that view as held by Roumanian politicians.

In spite of the awkwardness of his position, it was only in an official sense that he was at all out of place. He had been glad to get away from Warsaw, where his impartiality and sense of justice exposed him to suspicions alike from the Russians and from the Poles. At Dantzic

his official duties had been only those of a commercial consul; though it has been seen that he also occupied himself, by the express wish of the Foreign Office, with work of a highly varied political kind. At Belgrade he made but a short stay; and both politically and socially the place possessed far less importance, far less interest for him than Bucharest.

In the Roumanian capital he made many friends, and he took particular delight in the society of the King and Queen, for whom he entertained the highest respect, the sincerest admiration.



## CHAPTER XII

### RECOGNITION OF INDEPENDENCE

THE war of 1877 was in many ways a severe trial to Roumania, but one which she managed to support.

"It is really a wonder," wrote Mr. White from Bucharest to Lord Salisbury, "that Roumania was able to emerge so satisfactorily from all her complications, and to meet the increasing claims on her public purse without having had to submit, at that critical juncture of her modern history, to the onerous terms of a loan. The unfunded debt was alone increased, and the country was thus enabled to continue to pay without interruption the interest and annuities due to her foreign and domestic creditors—a circumstance which produced, as it invariably does, a naturally increased confidence on the principal exchanges of Europe, where Roumanian stock has acquired a degree of firmness not possessed by some larger states."

With all the interest he took in the country, Mr. White still held no official position in Roumania. His friends could scarcely make it out; and even the most exalted members of the diplomatic service wondered why the "Agent" (as Lord Lyons calls him in one of his despatches of this period) remained without definite rank.

Unable to stand it any longer, the functionaries of the Foreign Office named him "Minister" of their own accord.

"As I see some packets from the F. O. addressed to

you as Minister," wrote Sir Henry Elliot on April 12, 1879, "I hope I may congratulate you at last on having your frontier regularised. I don't know that much has been gained by the long hesitation in recognising, or that there is any great prospect of a real relief of the Jews from their disabilities; for if those born in the country are not to be entitled to be treated as Roumanians, the mere repeal of the obnoxious article of the constitution [setting forth that the privileges of a Roumanian are confined to Christians] will have little effect."

Sir Henry Elliot's congratulations were premature. Mr. White (though he had his credentials carefully locked up in his drawer) was still unaccredited, still without definite rank.

A few months afterwards M. Boeresco was despatched from Roumania to enlighten the Ministers of foreign lands on the subject of the Jewish Question—or, perhaps, to obscure their views, already far from lucid.

"I am afraid," wrote Sir Henry Elliot on this subject, August 11, 1879, "there is no great prospect of much coming out of this journey of M. Boeresco, whose object is apparently to recede from an essential part of Stourdza's project. He says that under his nominal list of Jews to be emancipated more will be benefited than would have been under the categories; but at the same time he admitted to me that the Government could carry the present proposal because the Chamber imagined that it would apply to fewer. Lord Salisbury has telegraphed to me to let Boeresco know that not much could be gained by his going to London—first, because he would probably himself be away, and also because his propositions seem so unsatisfactory that they would produce no result."

"The Germans are very much put out with the Roumanian Government," wrote Sir Henry Elliot, December 16, 1879, "for having as they consider, broken faith about the Railway Bill, by accepting the exclusion of the agreement by which the transfer of the seat of administration from Berlin to Bucharest can only take place, on its being sanctioned at a general meeting of the

shareholders; and without such sanction they declare that the transfer cannot legally be made. The recognition will consequently be again delayed as far as Germany is concerned; but I cannot at all guess the course that our Government will now take. It was intelligible that all the Powers should agree to defer the recognition till they were satisfied about the religious question; but they have pretty well made up their minds to pretend to be satisfied with what has been done upon that matter, though of course no one is really satisfied. I take personally the same view as you have recorded in one of your telegrams, of the more than doubtful policy of making our recognition depend upon the settlement of a question that is purely German, and has nothing earthly to do with the non-fulfilment of the religious-liberty clauses of the Treaty, which has hitherto prevented it; but Bismarck is making strong appeals to us all to hold together. The Italians announced their recognition only after it had been notified to the Roumanians, and without previous hint to the other Governments whom I suspect to have spoken in a manner that has induced the Italian Government to stop Torielli on his way to Bucharest.

"Yours sincerely,  
"HENRY ELLIOT."

At last, in the following letter, Sir Henry Elliot informed Mr. White that the moment for recognition had arrived, or was on the point of arriving; for there were still some preliminary matters to be settled.

"VIENNA,  
"Feb. 14, & March 8, 1880.

"DEAR MR. WHITE,

"I send you an official despatch received under flying seal from F. O. authorising you to notify the recognition of Roumania, in concert with the French and Germans. The intimation that what has been done for the Jews is considered as an instalment is not put in a way that need offend the Roumanians, and I congratulate you in escaping at last from your equivocal position. The Austrian Government will join the others in expressing the expectation that the principle of religious liberty agreed to at Berlin should have a further development."

There were no longer any religious disabilities in Roumania. But among foreigners not entitled to the franchise the Roumanians made no special exception in favour of the Jews.

They were placed on an exact equality with Englishmen and Frenchmen, with Catholics and Protestants. The principle of religious liberty agreed to at Berlin could not then have any further development.

So far in theory; though in practice the Roumanian chamber might show itself less inclined to grant letters of naturalisation to foreign Jews than to foreign Christians.

In vain did Baron de Worms and Mr. Montefiore protest in a letter to Lord Salisbury that Clause 44 of the Berlin Treaty was not being carried out. In vain, moreover, did they attribute to the Roumanians the doctrine no longer held by them that a Jew born in Roumania of Jewish parents was an alien by reason of his religion. He was an alien, like all other children of non-Roumanian parents, by reason of his not being of Roumanian blood. A Jew converted to Christianity would be in the same position as any other Jew. Of all the foreigners established in Roumania, the Jews seem to have been the only ones who claimed the suffrage; or the only ones, rather, for whom the suffrage was claimed.

Immediately before recognition was determined upon, Mr. White had written to Lord Salisbury, informing him that the mysterious Railway Bill was being hurried through the Chambers in order to satisfy the exigencies of the German Government.

Lord Salisbury wrote in reply that without deferring any longer the recognition of Roumania, he wished an intimation to be conveyed to the Roumanian Government,

"that the alteration made by them in the constitution was accepted by the Governments of France and England in the full confidence that, by a liberal execution of it, the Roumanian Government were resolved to bring the working of their law into exact conformity with the spirit of the 'Treaty of Berlin.'"

The English text of the identical note presented to the Roumanian Government, February 20, 1880, was in these terms:

"BUCHAREST,  
"February 20, 1880.

"The Undersigned, British Representative at Bucharest, has the honour, by order of his Government, to convey to M. Boeresco, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Roumania, the following communication:

"Her Britannic Majesty's Government have been informed, through the Agent of His Royal Highness the Prince of Roumania at Paris, of the promulgation, on the 25th October, 1879, of a Law, voted by the 'Chambre de Révision' of the Principality, for the purpose of bringing the text of the Roumanian Constitution into conformity with the stipulations inserted in Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin.

"Her Majesty's Government cannot consider the new Constitutional provisions which have been brought to their cognizance—and particularly those by which persons belonging to a non-Christian creed domiciled in Roumania, and not belonging to any foreign nationality, are required to submit to the formalities of individual naturalization—as being a complete fulfilment of the views of the Powers signatories of the Treaty of Berlin.

"Trusting, however, to the determination of the Prince's Government to approximate more and more, in the execution of these provisions, to the liberal intentions entertained by the Powers, and taking note of the positive assurances to that effect which have been conveyed to them, the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, being desirous of giving to the Roumanian nation a proof of their friendly sentiments, have decided to recognize the Principality of Roumania as an independent State. Her

Majesty's Government consequently declare themselves ready to enter into regular diplomatic relations with the Prince's Government.

"In bringing the decision come to by his Government to the knowledge of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Undersigned, &c.

"(Signed) W. A. WHITE."

It may here be mentioned that in connection with the recognition of Roumanian independence a semi-official pamphlet on the Jewish Question was issued, in which the important fact was dwelt upon, that in order to comply with the requirements of the Berlin Treaty, a Roumanian assembly elected for that purpose had revised a fundamental article of the Roumanian constitution.

The article which had to be dealt with was as follows :

"The character of Roumanian is acquired, preserved, and lost conformably with the civil law. Foreigners of Christian denominations can alone obtain naturalisation."

Thus Jews and Mahometans were alike excluded.

The Roumanians could scarcely be expected to alter the first clause of this article. They changed entirely, however, the second clause by placing naturalisation within the reach of all foreigners, without distinction of religion.

According to the semi-official publication just referred to, Jews under the new system would enjoy all the rights belonging to foreigners in general, who possessed the right of serving in the army and the national guard, the right of buying houses, or plots of land in towns, the right of becoming barristers and of serving on juries in towns, and of exercising freely every profession and every trade. They would enjoy the same legal position as Roumanians ; they would be protected in the same manner by the law ; while on applying for complete naturalisation by a petition

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to the Roumanian Parliament, they could obtain every right and privilege enjoyed by a Roumanian of Roumanian birth and descent.

After discussions by letter and despatch, special missions from Bucharest to the chief European capitals, protests, representations, and misrepresentations on the part of the *Alliance Israélite*, the Roumanians still refused to place Jews on an equality as regards civil and political rights with Roumanians of Roumanian blood. But they placed them on an equality with Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, and foreigners generally. All religious disabilities were removed ; while the other disabilities attaching to all aliens were suffered to remain, and remain still. The various propositions and counterpropositions on this subject occupied a great deal of Mr. White's attention during the years 1878, 1879, and 1880.

On March 20, 1880, Mr. White presented his letters of credence to Prince Charles I., who expressed much gratification, and replied in the following words :

“ M. LE MINISTRE,

“ Je suis heureux de recevoir les lettres par les, quelles Sa Majesté la Reine votre auguste Souveraine vous accrédite en qualité de son Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire auprès de moi. Je saisis avec empressement cette occasion de vous assurer du désir que j'éprouve de voir s'établir les meilleurs rapports entre la Roumanie et la Grande Bretagne, espérant que les liens d'amitié qui existent entre les deux pays se consolideront de plus en plus dans l'avenir. Les sentiments affectueux que Sa Majesté la Reine veut bien me témoigner me touchent tout particulièrement ; j'ai vu une nouvelle preuve de ses sentiments dans l'empressement que vous avez mis à présenter vos lettres de créance. Je suis charmé que votre Souveraine ait fait choix de votre personne pour la représenter à ma Cour, ayant pu apprécier les hautes qualités qui vous distinguent et connaissant l'intérêt sympathique que vous portez à la Roumanie. Mon

Gouvernement s'empressera de faire tout ce qui dépendra de lui pour faciliter votre mission, que je souhaite vous voir remplir pendant de longues années auprès de moi.

Mr. White now received his Treaty of Commerce, for which he was warmly thanked by Lord Salisbury, who on April 12, 1880, addressed him from Biarritz the following letter :

"MY DEAR MR. WHITE,

"I am very much obliged to you for your letter and for the copy of the Roumanian Treaty which you have forwarded to me. It will, I hope, be of considerable value to the commerce of this country, and the negotiation of it under circumstances of peculiar difficulty will reflect great credit on your diplomatic career.

"I have submitted to the Prime Minister the question whether the bestowal of a red ribbon on the Prince of Roumania ought to be taken in hand now, or whether it is properly a matter to be left to our successors. I shall now hold office very few days longer. As I shall probably not have occasion during that time to write to you again, allow me to take this opportunity of expressing my very cordial gratitude for the zealous co-operation you have given me during my short term of office, and for the judgment with which your duties have been performed.

"Believe me,

"Yours truly,

"SALISBURY."

So far everything in regard to the Commercial Treaty at which Mr. White had laboured with varying fortunes, in the midst of Jewish questions, railway jobs, and cessions of territory had gone well ; when suddenly, on reading the report of a Parliamentary debate, it seemed to him that his services in connection with the Treaty, together with the Treaty itself, were ignored by the Foreign Office.

A question had been asked in the House of Commons



as to whether of late any commercial treaties had been made with foreign Powers, to which the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs replied in the negative. This was startling news to Mr. White, and it must have surprised also Prince Charles of Roumania; for only six months had passed since the signing of the Commercial Treaty between Roumania and England.

Mr. White thereupon wrote, on September 8, 1880, the following letter to Sir Charles Dilke, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the time:

"BUCHAREST,  
"8 September, 1880.

"MY DEAR DILKE,

"The London papers received here dated Thursday morning September 2, bring a reply of yours to Mr. Bourke, your predecessor in office, in the House of Commons in which you are reported as having said,

"'That as far as you were aware no changes (*i.e.*, favourable ones to British Commerce) had been made by foreign countries in their tariffs within the last six months.'

"Considering that our Commercial Treaty with Roumania was signed on April 5, and ratified on July 12, 1880, and that it stipulated some important tariff reductions on British goods which have been very favourably commented on in the German and Austrian Press, I should have hoped that a memorandum to that effect would have been placed by the proper department in your hands previous to your going down to the House.

"The value of the cotton yarn imported here from Great Britain is estimated at the lowest at one million sterling (£1,000,000 stg.) per annum, and on these the reduction is from 21 to 15 per cent., 100 kilos or nearly two-and-sixpence per hundred weight. The other reductions affect copper, tin, brass, iron chains, rails and bedsteads, hoops, cutlery, hardware, and machinery. The omission of any mention of this is unfair, not only to myself, but still more to the country where I have the honour of being accredited, and it is chiefly on that account that I deplore it. Here at Bucharest every one

is aware, and no one better than my colleagues and the Government, with what difficulties I have had to contend in order to obtain a satisfactory conclusion of this part of my negotiations; and it will appear very strange that the results obtained are so little appreciated at home, and that they were not thought deserving of the slightest notice in your reply.

"One might have imagined that this single exception of tariff charges in a more liberal sense might not have escaped unnoticed, and would have rather deserved some public recognition and encouragement at a time when increasing duties appear to be the rule on the Continent.

"The close of the Session will prevent the matter from being put straight now for many months, but I trust you will think it but natural on my part that I should make this apparent to you.

"I fear these lines will not reach the F.O. till after your departure, and I have taken the liberty therefore to send them under flying seal to Mr. Sanderson, as I should also like Lord Granville to see them.

"I am, yours sincerely,

"W. A. WHITE."

The question put by Mr. Bourke in the House was one which he himself ought better than any one to have been able to answer, at least as regarded the Commercial Treaty with Roumania; for it was he, not Sir Charles Dilke, who was in office as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs when the Treaty was signed.

Some months before the recognition of Roumanian Independence Mr. White received two interesting letters from Sir Robert Morier, which may here be given.

"CINTRA,

"29 June, 1879.

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I fancied you were to be off to Bucharest at once, but I see you were at the Cobden Club dinner, and so this may perhaps reach you in London. I feel no heart in writing to a man at Bucharest with only a probability of getting an answer a year hence. It's like writing to

the moon. I very much regret that I saw so little of you in London and that in such a hurry. But never was a poor devil so harried with work as I was the last 14 days of my stay. Well, I won the game all round there (not the way to make friends), and left very cheerfully, believing all my troubles at an end, and that within three weeks of my return to Lisbon my two treaties would be through the Cortes and about ready for ratification. Imagine what was my consternation on arrival to find the Ministry on the point of resignation! I have been bowled over once or twice before in my life, but such a bowl over as that I never dreamt of as belonging to the possibilities of even Portuguese politics; and such a consequent three weeks as I had!—never, I hope, may I have the like again. Some day I hope to tell you the story, for it is as good as a play. And now of yourself, the last day I was in London the great Philip [now Lord] Currie condescended to let the light of his countenance fall on the humble personage who represents the Queen at Lisbon, and so I asked him a variety of questions. He spoke disparagingly and disagreeably of many persons I asked about, till I came to you, and on this topic had not too much praise to bestow, saying you had done *most admirably*—I am particularly anxious to *constater* this, because this was *not* his tone on his return from Constantinople. I always think it a service to a real friend to communicate these *commérages*, because it makes the whole difference in the efficiency of one's work whether one knows that your employers are satisfied with it.

"I wish you could find time to give me some gossip. I am extremely vexed at Petre not getting Rio. It seems to me a crying shame.

"Then I should like to have a notion or two about Egypt—*je n'y vois que du feu*. What are we about? Must we invoke Bismarck's aid even there? And can we do nothing by ourselves? How absolute has been the imbecility of leaving Chelmsford at the Cape! Conceive a man with 36,000 troops being unable to do anything without asking for 4 more regiments when there is neither food nor transport for those he already has!

"Ever yours faithfully,

"R. B. MORIER.

"Mind you answer before leaving."

"CINTRA,  
"11th July, 1879.

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"Mrs. Morier, looking over an old *Times* this morning, chanced to stumble on your name at the last *levée* as H.M. Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Bucharest. I write most heartily to congratulate you. Of course I knew you were to be Minister, and believed the matter was only delayed till circumcision had been placed on a footing of equality with baptism in Roumania. As I go on the principle of being always very exact, I had addressed you as still Consul-General. Please pardon me for doing so, and accept my best wishes on your promotion to the highest rank of the hierarchy short of Ambassador.

"I see that Roggenbach is in London. You know that for years I have wished you to meet, because in every way and for 10,000 reasons you should know each other. He is a perfectly honourable man—one out of the three or four perfectly honourable (as a man and a politician) I have as yet succeeded in discovering after 30 years' search. He is a liberal Catholic. He is the *amicus curiæ* of the Roumanian Hohenzollern. Do all you can to cultivate him.

"Let me know how long you remain in London. I should like to send some letters I wrote at the time of the Congress about Roumania—but don't like to send them all the way to Bucharest.

"Yours,  
"R. B. MORIER."

## CHAPTER XIII

### ROUMANIANS IN TRANSYLVANIA

FOR a man who, like Sir William White, took a keen interest in "questions," there could be no more delightful country than Roumania at the time of the Berlin Conference and for nearly two years afterwards.

1. Roumania and the Jewish Question.
2. Roumania and the question of the retrocession of Bessarabia.
3. Roumania and the question of the mouths of the Danube.
4. Roumania and the question of a Russian military road through Roumanian territory.
5. Roumania and the Bismarckian Railway Question.
6. Roumania and the question of her continued existence as an independent State, with the further question whether her life was threatened by Russia, by Austria, or by the two in combination.
7. Roumania and the Roumanian Question in Transylvania.

These were the questions—some of them burning ones—which Mr. White had to keep before him during the first two years of his stay at Bucharest.

For him personally, moreover, there was the very interesting question which for so long a time remained undecided: whether he was to be accredited to the Roumanian Court (1) as Consul-General and Diplomatic

Agent—his rank at Belgrade ; (2) as Minister Resident ; or (3) as Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

He, in fact, leapt from the rank of Consul-General to that of Minister Plenipotentiary—the highest point but one in diplomacy—at a single bound.

Except, meanwhile, the question of the Roumanians in Transylvania and the injustice to which they were exposed at the hands of the Hungarians, there was not one of the above questions which at the beginning of 1880 had not, temporarily at least, been settled ; though the question of the Danubian mouths was later to be made the subject of a special conference. It signifies but little what was said at this conference. As a matter of fact the Danube up to Galatz is now navigated by the Russians.

The question of the Roumanians in Transylvania and their alleged oppression by the Hungarian rulers of that province seems to have puzzled Lord Salisbury when he first came across it ; and his Lordship was disposed to regard it as a recently-got-up question, by which the Roumanians of the kingdom hoped to gain some advantage for themselves.

So at least it appears from a passing reference to the matter in an unofficial letter from his Lordship to Mr. White.

The question, however, was a genuine one, with real grievances beneath it, by which not the Roumanians of the kingdom, but the Roumanians of Transylvania alone suffered ; while, far from being new, it dated from the great year of nationalistic aspirations and uprisings, 1848.

The Roumanians of Transylvania were scarcely at that time in an inferior position to the Roumanians of the not

yet united provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia ; both under the suzerainty of Turkey, and both threatened alternately by Russia and by Austria—to say nothing of an occasional occupation on the part of the Turks. Since, however, the existence of Roumania as an independent state, the oppressed Roumanians of Transylvania had accustomed themselves to look to their Roumanian kinsfolk beyond the border for sympathy and support.

Apart from the compulsory use of Hungarian as the language of the schools, the public offices, and the tribunals, the Roumanians of Transylvania complained that even those among them who had mastered the Hungarian tongue were largely excluded—not legally, but as a matter of fact—from Government service.

In connection with the compulsory use of Hungarian as the sole language of instruction, a curious difficulty had arisen. Patriotic Roumanians in the kingdom of Roumania, have from time to time made bequests for the maintenance of Roumanian schools in Transylvania. The funds bequeathed are at the disposal of the Roumanian Minister of Public Instruction, who, however, if he hands them over to the Hungarian Minister of Public Instruction for the purposes of the legacy, finds that they cannot be so applied, the object of the Hungarian Government being not to encourage, but to extirpate the Roumanian language in Transylvania. Yet the Roumanian Minister must do something with the money confided to him ; and he finds himself exposed to the attacks of the party out of office, whether he gives it or withholds it.

In the Bukovina, where the bulk of the population is Roumanian, the administration is in the hands of Austrian officials, who, as in the adjacent Galicia and

other parts of Austria, recognise the right of the inhabitants to use their native tongue. They are not represented in any assembly. But they do not suffer from the annoyance, humiliation, and positive injury of having a foreign language forced upon them.

There are no complaints, then, from the Roumanians of the Bukovina, nor need there be from the Roumanians of Transylvania, if the Hungarian Government would only abstain from unavailing attempts to turn them into Hungarians. These endeavours have, of course, no effect but to stimulate their national feeling and render them more Roumanian than ever.

It would be impossible indeed, to cite one instance of a foreign population rendered loyal by having an alien tongue forced upon it.

The constantly increasing importance of Roumania as an independent State has rendered more and more difficult for Hungary the government of her Roumanian subjects in Transylvania. The strong national character of the Roumanians cannot be destroyed, and it is only developed and hardened by the endeavours so persistently made to turn them into Hungarians.

The oppressed condition of the Roumanians in Transylvania has, unfortunately, an injurious effect upon the relations between Roumania and Austria-Hungary, which might otherwise be of the most friendly character. It causes bad blood, moreover, between the only two races in Eastern Europe—the Hungarians and the Roumanians,—who, according to Sir Henry Layard, understand self-government and can be counted upon to defend their liberty and independence.

That not the Roumanians alone, but in an equal degree the Saxon inhabitants of Transylvania, are subject to grave injustice at the hands of the Hungarian Government



is shown by a much esteemed writer who, in her delightful work on Transylvania,<sup>1</sup> concludes as follows an edifying account of a criminal process against two Saxons :

"Characteristic of Magyar legislation was the circumstance of the whole trial being conducted in Hungarian, though this language was absolutely unknown to the two German prisoners, who were thus debarred the doubtful privilege of comprehending their own death-sentence when finally pronounced about a year after their crime. Its meaning, however, was subsequently made known to them ; for Anton von Kleeberg and Rudolf Martin were executed at Hermannstadt on the 16th June, 1885."

As with the Saxons, so it would be with Roumanians brought to trial in Transylvania. They would be accused, borne witness against, and sentenced in an unknown tongue.

"There is no doubt," writes the English lady just quoted, "that the bulk of Roumanians living to-day in Hungary and Transylvania consider themselves to be serving in bondage and constantly gaze over the frontier to their real monarch ; and who can blame them for so doing ? In the many Roumanian hovels that I have visited in Transylvania I have frequently come across the portrait of the King of Roumania hung upon the place of honour, but never once that of His Austrian Majesty. Old woodcuts representing Michael the Brave, the great hero of the Roumanians, and of the rebel Hora, are also pretty sure to be found adorning the walls of many a hut. It is likewise by no means uncommon to see village taverns bearing such titles as 'To the King of Roumania,' 'To the United Roumanian Kingdom,' &c."

The writer then relates a strikingly suggestive incident which came beneath her notice at Hermannstadt on the Roumanian frontier.

<sup>1</sup> *The Land Beyond the Forest*. By E. Gerard. Blackwood.

"Two Roumanian generals, engaged in some business regarding the regulation of the frontier, being at Hermannstadt for a few days, paid visits to the principal Austrian Military authorities, and were the object of much courteous attention. One evening the Austrian Commanding General had ordered the military band to play in honour of his Roumanian *confrères*, and seated along with them on the promenade we were listening to the music. Presently two or three private soldiers, passing by, stopped in front of us to stare at the foreign uniforms. Apparently their curiosity was not easily satisfied, for after five minutes had elapsed they still remained standing as though rooted to the spot; and other soldiers had joined them as well, till the group soon numbered about a dozen heads.

"Being engaged in conversation, I did not at the moment pay much attention to the circumstance, but, happening to turn round some minutes later, I was surprised to see that the spectators had become doubled and quadrupled in the meantime, and were steadily increasing every minute. Little short of a hundred soldiers were now standing in front of us all, gazing intently. Why were they gazing thus strangely? What were they looking at? I asked myself confusedly, but luckily checked the question rising to my lips, when it suddenly struck me that all these men had swarthy complexions, and each one of them a pair of dark eyes; and simultaneously I remembered that the infantry regiment whose uniform they wore was recruited from Roumanian villages round Hermannstadt.

"They were perfectly quiet and submissive-looking, betraying no sign of outward excitement or insubordination; but their expression was not to be mistaken, and no attentive observer could have failed to read its meaning aright. It was at *their own generals* they were gazing in that hungry-looking manner; and deep down in every dusky eye, piercing through a thick layer of patience, stupidity, apathy, and military discipline there smouldered a spark of something vague and intangible, the germ of the sort of fire which has often kindled revolutions and overturned kingdoms.

"Heaven only knows what was passing in the clouded brain of these poor ignorant men as they stood thus gaping and staring in the intensity of their rapt attention; visions of glory and freedom, perchance, dreams of peace

and prosperity, dim, far-off pictures of unattainable happiness of a golden age to come, and an Arcadian state of things no more to be found on the dull surface of this weary world.

"The Austrian generals tried not to look annoyed, the Roumanian generals tried not to look elated, and the English looker-on endeavoured (I trust somewhat more successfully) to conceal her amusement at the serio-comicality of the situation which one and all we tacitly ignored with that excellent hypocrisy characterising well-bred persons of every nation."

Probably nothing could now stop the attraction exercised by free and independent Roumania upon the more or less enslaved Roumanians of Transylvania. The effect of rational government might of course be tried. But the Hungarians are unfortunately resolved on carrying out their own impracticable system of Hungarianizing all the non-Hungarian populations subject to their rule.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MUTUAL ANNEXATION PROJECTS IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA. LETTERS FROM SIR HENRY LAYARD

FROM 1878 until the beginning of 1881, Mr White received at Bucharest an immense number of letters from Sir Henry Layard at Constantinople. The following is an extract from one of these, dated September 5, 1878.

"Roumania will now, as you say, occupy a very important, and at the same time dangerous position, in the midst of the Slav and Slavonian-speaking races, whose ambitious designs and aspirations have been vastly encouraged by recent events. It will remain for her and Hungary to fight the battle of liberty and national independence against an unscrupulous and greedy people. I could never understand the hostility of the Liberal party in England to Hungary, and the denunciation of her by Liberal leaders. One would have thought that a country which had bled for Liberal institutions, and had upheld the course of freedom for so long in the midst of the despotic Powers of Eastern Europe, would have deserved the sympathy and support of Liberal England. But the world seems turned upside down.

"I trust that Roumania will persist in her disposition to establish good relations with the Porte. She must not be discouraged if at first her advances are coldly received. After all she behaved towards Turkey with unparalleled treachery, and has been the main cause of the disasters of this unhappy country. In the course of time the feelings of the Turks may soften down, and the Porte may see then that it is to its interest to be on the most friendly terms with Roumania. Your interest and

advice will contribute a good deal towards establishing such relations. D. Bratiano will, I think, be a good choice for Roumanian representative here. . . . You write about a project of assuring to Roumania Bulgaria up to the Balkans. Does the possibility of such an arrangement enter into Roumanian calculations? It would certainly be a good way of putting an end to Russian influence and progress in European Turkey; but would it ever be effected without a great war in which Russia were completely defeated?"

Notwithstanding his contempt for Servia and his condemnation of Roumania for the part she had taken against Turkey during the war (and for that alone), Layard entertained a genuine admiration for Christitch, the Envoy of Servia at Constantinople, and for Demètre Bratiano, (elder brother of the eminent statesman), who represented Roumania at the Porte.

It was when Bratiano was on the point of arriving at Constantinople that Sir Henry Layard, on October 4, 1878, addressed to Mr. White the following letters:

"MY DEAR MR. WHITE,

"I shall be glad to see Mr. Bratiano and will do what I can for him. When the idea of uniting Bulgaria to Roumania was first suggested to me I did not think the arrangement desirable or practicable. But after what has taken place, I have changed my opinion to a certain extent. However, I doubt whether Russia would ever consent to it. She would resist it to the extent of war. It appears to me that the best policy of the Roumanian Government would be to establish the most friendly relations with the Porte founded upon mutual interests, to conciliate the Mussulman population of the Dobrudja and to govern that province justly and well.

"Dondakoff Korsakoff states openly that the Treaty and Congress of Berlin are *une comédie d'Offenbach*, and that Russia has no intention whatever of permitting the Treaty to be carried out. But his language is not perhaps to be taken *au pied de la lettre*, and I trust that when the

commission arrives at Philippopolis, which it should do as soon as possible, the Prince will think better of it.

"The deplorable manner in which Austria has effected the annexation of Bosnia adds very much to the difficulties with which we shall have to contend in executing the treaty.

"I should doubt whether Austria would permit the Prince of Montenegro to be elected Prince of Bulgaria also, unless she has entirely changed her policy."

On October 18, 1878, Sir H. Layard wrote to Mr. White as follows:

"I communicated an extract from your letter of the 7th, relating to the policy of Turkey as regards Austria, to high quarters, suppressing, of course, your name, and stating that the advice came from a true friend of both countries, who had the best means of forming an opinion on the subject. I think what you wrote made some impression; but the unfortunate circulars about the cruelties attributed to the Austrian troops in Bosnia had already been launched. It is a most unwise and suicidal act on the part of the Porte to make public accusations of this nature against Austria.

"Although I know by official reports that I have received from very trustworthy sources that some of the Austrian generals have behaved with great harshness and cruelty towards their prisoners, and the Mussulman population; yet in order to bring the matter to the notice of Europe, the Porte might have taken other measures less offensive to Austria. Unfortunately, nowadays, patriotism is a crime; and a man who ventures to defend his country and his property is an insurgent, and must be summarily shot when taken. This is unlucky for patriots, but they have nothing else to do but to give up their country, their wives, and their property, and make the best of it. It is, however, not a little curious that we are come to this in the nineteenth century, and that such principles should be sanctioned by solemn treaties.

"The wholesale destruction of the Mussulman population, and the shocking outrages practised upon them, are still continuing. It will be completely destroyed in Bulgaria, and will be so reduced in Roumelia that it will soon perish there.

"I should think that at least a million Mussulman lives have already been sacrificed. I am glad to hear that the Roumanian Government is disposed to encourage and treat kindly the Mahommedans. It will be good policy, I am convinced, for it to do so."

After M. Bratiano had arrived at Constantinople Sir Henry Layard wrote again to Mr. White:

"THERAPIA,  
"Oct. 28/78

"MY DEAR MR. WHITE,

"Affairs in European Turkey are going on ill, and we are threatened with a serious insurrection in Macedonia.

"I see by the telegram that the new Ministry in Austria is disposed to abandon the policy that has led to the present unfortunate state of affairs as regards Bosnia, and to come to some arrangement with the Porte. I earnestly hope that such may be the case, and that close and intimate relations may be established between the two countries. This is very necessary to both in the presence of the determined intention of Russia to carry out her designs for the destruction and partition of this Empire. Unless they are united, they are both doomed. I shall be very glad to see M. Bratiano again, and to give him all the support in my power. I never lose an opportunity of endeavouring to persuade the Turks of the importance of maintaining the most friendly relations with Roumania, and I think they feel it; but unfortunately they are lukewarm and dilatory in all their movements, instead of hastening to establish such relations by every possible means. I hear that Suleiman Bey is clever and intelligent, but I should say that he was too young and inexperienced for the post of Turkish Minister at Bucharest. You must kindly aid him with your advice.

"Yours very truly,  
"A. H. LAYARD."

"I am glad," wrote Sir Henry, on November 1, 1878, "that Lord Salisbury has spoken so plainly to the Russian Government as to our intention of compelling

the Russians to evacuate Eastern Roumelia and Bulgaria when the time comes for their doing so, and has warned Roumania of the danger of falling into the Russian trap. I have only seen Bratiano once. He was to have dined with us and passed the night here, but he was unwell and unable to come. I shall invite him again. The Porte is desirous of meeting the Roumanians in the most friendly and conciliatory spirit, but you know how slow it always is in putting its good intentions into execution. This constant procrastination and dilatoriness drive one to despair in dealing with the Turks, and frustrate all one's attempts to serve them and to deliver them from the terrible troubles into which they have fallen."

A few days after the arrival at Constantinople of M. Bratiano as minister for Roumania, Sir Henry Layard wrote to Mr. White as follows :

"I saw Bratiano yesterday. He seems to be much satisfied with his reception here, and tells me that he finds the Porte very much disposed to come to a cordial understanding with Roumania ; but he is very anxious that England and France should lose no time in recognising her—Jews or no Jews—and he urges me to write to Lord Salisbury on the subject. I told him that it was out of my province to do so, and that I knew that you were doing all that could properly be done in the matter. He professes himself very much alarmed at the designs of Russia with regard to the Dobrudja, and seems to think that she will not give it up before securing a secret agreement with the Roumanian Government. He communicated to me a telegram on the subject a day or two ago from Mr. Kogolniceano, which he had been authorised to submit to me.

"The Commission at Philippopolis has great difficulties to contend with. It is, however, doing one useful thing—verifying the atrocities committed by the Russians and Bulgarians upon the Mussulmans, and protesting publicly against them."

A letter from Sir Henry Layard, dated April 14, 1879, contains the following remarkable passage, which by all



who are interested in the Eastern Question is well worth bearing in mind :

"The great danger to be apprehended in the East of Europe is that Roumania and Hungary should be enveloped and crushed by the Slavs, which they will inevitably be if Russia is allowed to form all the so-called Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula into a great, compact Slav nationality, which will ultimately extinguish all elements of independence and civilisation."

"Bratiano," wrote Sir Henry, December 20, 1878, "spoke to me about his plan for getting Prince Charles elected Prince of Bulgaria, and asked my opinion. It was too grave a matter for me to express any opinion about it. I told him that I could not answer for the policy that H.M. Government might think fit to pursue. He then asked my advice as to whether he should proceed to London to place the matter before Lord Salisbury and endeavour to obtain the support of England for his scheme. I could not advise him on this point. I recommended him to keep the matter quiet, and to sound Zichy and Fournier, which he appears to have done, and to have received encouraging replies from them—according to his own account. The Grand Vizier, he says, and one or two of the Turkish ministers, expressed their approval.

"But would Russia consent to such an arrangement as Bratiano proposes? Would she not defeat it by force or intrigue? And would the Bulgarians themselves consent to it under the constraint and influence of Russia as they now are? Therefore, however good Bratiano's scheme may be, I doubt very much whether it is practicable."

The two next letters from Sir Henry Layard are very interesting in connection with a new understanding, now for the first time observed, between France and Russia.

At the Berlin Conference Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury had succeeded in obtaining for England the co-operation both of France and of Germany—a combination which to the Russians might well have seemed impossible; and Russia now considered it absolutely

necessary to detach France, since she could not separate Germany, from the European League which she had found arrayed against her at Berlin.

The Franco-Russian understanding now formed was anterior to the understanding between Germany and Austria—its natural consequence as soon as Prince Bismarck was able to enlighten Count Andrassy as to what was really going on.

The idea that Russia and France were working together had already been suggested to Sir Henry Layard by Mr. White, who had been much struck by the friendly relations between the Russian and French Ministers at Bucharest.

"The policy," wrote Sir Henry, "of French agents in the East, to which you refer in your letter, is somewhat mysterious. They appear to be everywhere supporting the Russians and Russian policy—here, in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, and also in Roumania."

In a letter dated May 9, 1879, Sir Henry speaks of "intrigues in the Palace to which the Russians and, I am afraid, my French colleague are not strangers. What line," he asks, "are the French now taking in Roumania?"

The Franco-Russian understanding is again referred to in a letter dated December 2, 1879, explaining to Mr. White a movement of the English fleet in connection with possible disturbances, sure to be followed by outrages, in Armenia.

"It is absolutely necessary," he writes, "that every effort should be made to induce or compel the Porte to introduce the reforms promised to us, and it ought to be understood that it is only by doing so that it can secure the support of England.

"I have a strong suspicion," he adds, "that the French are going with Russia; many circumstances have come to my knowledge which seem to confirm it."

Here is another letter of December, 1879, from Sir H. Layard to Mr. White:

"A small retrograde anti-European clique have taken advantage of the constitutional timidity and suspicious nature of the Sultan to impose their influence upon him, and to induce him to enter upon a line of policy which may end in his ruin and that of his Empire. This is especially lamentable when Turkey, through a combination of circumstances—amongst them, the understanding arrived at between Andrassy and Bismarck to which you refer in your letter—had an excellent chance of recovering herself and of securing the sympathy and support of England. All the most liberal-minded statesmen have been exiled from the capital on the pretence of giving them provinces to govern. I see no one capable of directing the affairs of the state in the present crisis.

"The alliance between Germany and Austria must, as you say, have an immense effect on European politics. I trust that it may be for good, and that it may at least secure peace to us for some years to come. It could not but be favourable to Turkey if she knew how to take advantage of it. . . .

"I am glad that the visit of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria to his fellow prince passed off well, and that you were pleased with him. He will have no little difficulty in governing his province in the face of Russian intrigue, and it is thought not unlikely that Aleko will be driven to resign in order to make room for Alexander, who will then be at once elected Prince of United Bulgaria; the union, being effected by a *coup de main* similar to that practised in Moldo-Wallachia."

Six years afterwards what Sir Henry Layard had foreseen was accomplished.

Towards the end of January, 1880, Bratiano was once more at Constantinople, when he spoke of his country "in terms of despair." He told Sir Henry that Bismarck evidently intended to drive the Prince to resign, and to make the Principality disappear as an independent state.

"But whether his policy is that it should be absorbed by Austria or Russia he (Bratiano) cannot tell. He believes that Bismarck's object will be effected within a year and a half or two years, and seems to take a very gloomy view of the affairs of his country—I hope, an exaggerated one. But there are certainly strong reasons for suspecting that Bismarck is meditating something in that direction."

In regard to the Franco-Russian understanding he adds :

"France is going entirely with Russia and against us in questions connected with Turkey. Whether this is the personal policy of my colleague, M. Fournier, or that of his Government I cannot tell you ; I can only say that from all our consuls I hear that the French and Russians act together. The conduct and policy of the Porte are in the meanwhile just leading the Empire to ruin. Anarchy, mis-government, discontent, and disaffection are prevailing on all sides. The catastrophe may come sooner than the worst enemies of this country have anticipated. I have done my best to avert it, and can do no more. I can only hope that the Sultan will open his eyes in time and rid himself of the evil counsellors who form a clique in his palace and now virtually govern the country."

The following letter, the last on political matters that Sir Henry Layard addressed to Mr. White, was written after the return of the Liberals to power ; also after the recognition of the independence of Roumania :

"DEAR MR. WHITE,

"PERA,  
"April 27, 1880.

"I rejoice that I have again the means of corresponding direct with you. The welcome appearance of your letter of the 5th April, for which pray accept my thanks, was like that of the leaves in spring. It is of particular importance that I should be able to write to and hear from you. At the present time the state of Turkey is about as bad as it can be ; and the accession of the Liberal Government to office will encourage the various elements of disorder which exist in this unhappy country to show themselves, unless they are speedily

warned, that they will receive no sympathy and support from England. I am very glad that so experienced and moderate a man as Lord Granville is to be Foreign Secretary—at least so the public telegrams say. He will not be disposed to encourage attempts to upset the order of things established by the Treaty of Berlin and to countenance the uprising of Eastern nationalities which would lead to fresh bloodshed and to renewed European interference. Something will have to be done with regard to Eastern Roumelia. Aleko Pasha is simply defying the Porte and all Europe. The former appears hopeless and helpless with respect to him, and the latter has hitherto shown no disposition to interfere. The result is that Aleko and his Bulgarian advisers are quietly setting aside the Treaty of Berlin and the organic statute, playing the game of Russia, and preparing the way for the cession of the province to Bulgaria.

"The Porte seems anxious to establish very friendly relations with Roumania, and the Sultan has shown marked attention and civility to Bratiano, inviting him more than once to dinner, and conferring all kinds of honours upon him.

"Yours very truly,  
"A. H. LAYARD."

In spite of Sir Henry Layard's confidence in Lord Granville as "an experienced and moderate man," he received from his lordship, in the first month of 1881, a letter, dated January 14, recalling him in a not very friendly manner, and with a certain forced courtesy, from his post at Constantinople. If Sir Henry Elliot, however, had been found too Turkish for the political situation at home when a Conservative Government was in power, what must Sir Henry Layard have been after the Liberals had come into office?

Lord Granville's despatch was in the following terms :

"SIR,

"FOREIGN OFFICE,  
"January 14, 1881.

"The Queen having signified her pleasure that Her Majesty should for the present continue to be

represented at the Porte by an Ambassador as a Special Embassy, Her Majesty has been pleased to command that the termination of your Excellency's Embassy shall be notified to the Sultan, and as it might be inconvenient for you to proceed to Constantinople to deliver your letters of recall in person, arrangements have been made for their delivery to the Sultan through Her Majesty's Acting Representative at the Porte.

"In thus notifying to you officially the termination of your Embassy, it is my agreeable duty to convey to you the Queen's appreciation of the energy and ability with which you conducted the business under circumstances of exceptional difficulty, and I have at the same time to express the hope that your services may not hereafter be entirely lost to the country.

"I have advised Her Majesty that your salary as her Ambassador at the Porte should cease and determine on the 31st December last, and Her Majesty has signified her pleasure to that effect accordingly.

"I am, etc.,  
(Signed) "GRANVILLE."

It appears from the above that, on being dismissed from his post, an English ambassador receives a fortnight's notice counted backwards, with deduction from salary to correspond.

## CHAPTER XV

### A SERIES OF AMBASSADORS

SIR HENRY LAYARD was a little sanguine in the conviction he had expressed that the new Foreign Minister would do his best to see the provisions of the Berlin Treaty put into execution. The introduction of reforms in Armenia which had so often and so ineffectively been pressed upon the Porte by Lord Salisbury was now to be taken up with equal unsucces by Lord Granville.

The culpable withdrawal of the military vice-consuls appointed by Lord Beaconsfield, and the intentional failure of the Turks to form and despatch to Armenia the promised gendarmerie under English officers (for which the English officers alone were forthcoming), helped to prepare the way for the massacre of the unarmed undefended population ; and when Mr. Goschen arrived at Constantinople, towards the end of May, 1881, as Special Ambassador, not only were no reforms being introduced into Armenia, but the Kurds and other savage tribes were ravaging the country. Hundreds of villages were destroyed by these barbarians, and their inhabitants forced to take refuge in Russia, where they were welcomed as living proofs of the iniquity of the Turkish Government. All serious intention of forcing the Turks to furnish the gendarmerie for Armenia seemed now to have been abandoned.

In Eastern Roumelia were being repeated by Bulgarians upon the Turks, the acts of murder and outrage which had caused such indignation and horror when perpetrated by Turks upon Bulgarians. A rising of Mahometans having taken place at Philippopolis, where it was suppressed in the most savage manner by the Bulgarian Militia under Russian officers, some twenty Turkish villages were plundered and partly destroyed; the inhabitants being, for the most part, massacred.

Some of the worst excesses were committed by the societies of "Gymnasts," which were really companies and battalions of volunteers; their gymnastic exercises being exclusively of a military kind. Numbers of Turkish mosques and schools were burned, and the government of the new province seemed to have no power over its own troops. When the late Mr. Thomas Michell, C.B., the newly appointed Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent in Eastern Roumelia, despatched to the Foreign Office a faithful account of the scenes he had witnessed at Philippopolis, his report was looked upon as exaggerated. But Colonel Green, who was sent out to verify Mr. Michell's account, declared it to be very moderate, and well within the limits of the bare truth.

Mr. White would soon have to occupy himself with the affairs of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, and of Servia in its opposition to Bulgaria; and he had already at Bucharest given his attention to the strained relations existing between Bulgaria and Roumania. Repeated complaints had been made by the Roumanian residents at Rustchuk of the treatment to which they were subjected by the Bulgarian authorities, but without effect.

Soon afterwards bands of armed Turks entered Bulgaria; and it was alleged that they had been formed in the Drobrudja, with the knowledge and approval of the



Roumanians. This produced such an outcry against Roumania, both in the assembly and in the Press of Bulgaria, that a breach of diplomatic relations between the two countries seemed imminent. M. Stourdza, the Roumanian Agent, was, in fact, recalled from Sophia, and a commission of inquiry was appointed by the Bulgarian Government ; when it appeared that the accusation brought against the Roumanian authorities of having taken part in the formation of the Turkish bands was quite unfounded.

All complicity on the part of Roumania having been disproved, there seemed for the moment to be no further cause for dissension between the two states. But a fresh misunderstanding soon broke out in connection with the naturalisation or non-naturalisation of a Bulgarian in Roumania ; and at the time of Mr. Goschen's arrival in Constantinople the attitude towards one another of the newly formed and newly liberated states of the Balkan Peninsula was by no means encouraging.

There could be no question as to Mr. Goschen's high ability. But the plan of sending out special ambassadors accredited only for a short, indefinite time was scarcely a good one. No previous knowledge of Turkey was thought necessary on their part, nor did they remain long enough to inspire confidence.

Mr. Goschen, who had been preceded by Sir Henry Layard who had been preceded by Sir Henry Elliot, was to be followed by Lord Dufferin ; who exercised great influence and had indeed become a power at Constantinople when he was called away to fill a still higher post : that of Viceroy of India.

Some six months after his arrival at Constantinople Lord Dufferin addressed to Mr. White at Bucharest the following letter about Egyptian affairs :

" THERAPIA,  
" 30 June, 1882.

" MY DEAR WHITE,

" I am so much obliged to you for your kind letter of the 28th of June. I quite agree with you in thinking that this Egyptian business is the most troublesome we have had for some time. The position of every one concerned—England, France, the Sultan and the Khedive—is equally thorny. I am doing my best to get the Sultan to move; but, naturally enough, he cannot bear the thought of coming into collision with a Mahomedan people, and having the task of cutting their throats in the interests of two infidel Powers. The French abhor the notion of Turkish military intervention, and though we drag them to the pond we may have difficulty in making them drink. I hear that in Egypt the French agent and the leading French officials are hand in glove with Arabi. That is not the Marquis de Noailles' line. I only hope your friend, Mr. de Ring, will not be able to impress him with his ideas.

" In England the great mass of opinion seems to be against the Egyptian national party; but it must be gall and wormwood to some of the radicals to send Turkish troops against the champions of Arab independence; I myself don't like it.

" Yours sincerely,

" DUFFERIN."

Some months later, in the year 1883, there was a chance of Sir William White's being sent to Egypt, where he would have met, as a possible political antagonist, his intimate and much-esteemed friend, M. Camille Barrère, now French Ambassador at Rome. "He was somewhat disappointed at not going there," writes M. Barrère; "but he said to me with that genial laugh that you know, 'After all it is better so; we know each other too well.'"

I cannot here do better than give another extract from M. Barrère's letter; written in English, of which he is as much a master as of French.

"White was anxious to know Gambetta who at the time was President of the Chamber of Deputies. I took him to the Palais-Bourbon, where they had a long talk and were much struck and pleased with each other. White admired Gambetta greatly.

"White was one of the most genial diplomatists I ever met. His athletic form contained a mind of extraordinary shrewdness; he showed me a kind of fatherly liking; and I owe him many a profitable lesson on men and things. Brilliant as was his career, my impression has always been that it might have been greater if the times had helped him more, and if he had attained a higher sphere of public service younger. Anyhow, such as he was, he can be quoted as one of the most striking figures of modern diplomacy; and I am very glad to hear that his life is to be told by you.

"Yours very sincerely

"CAMILLE BARRÈRE."

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE NEW BALKAN STATES

THE truth of Sir Henry Layard's oft-repeated saying, that it would be found very difficult to replace "Turkey in Europe," was proved by the number of different projects brought forward for that purpose when European-Turkey had been virtually destroyed.

Sir Henry Layard would have liked to keep it going in its old shape, introducing reforms and endeavouring to place Mahometans and Christians on an equal footing, until at last the inevitable change would have come without too great a shock. Now that the change had come (with a frightful shock) Sir Henry had little or nothing to propose in the way of constructive policy.

The idea of a Balkan Confederation was much in favour—one might almost say in fashion—at the time. But such a combination would have been at the mercy of Russia, of Austria, or of both together.

The difficulties in the way of an independent Confederation were well set forth by Sir Charles Dilke in the following letter to Sir William White :

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I fancy you inclined to the Balkan Federation, which also seems Chamberlain's view. I shall be writing soon about this and I find great difficulties. A Federation of Bulgaria and Greece is a Federation of a cat and a dog. There are no two countries that hate each

other more. Then Roumania detests Bulgaria also. The Federation would be directed against Austria as well as against Russia, and the two would combine to prevent it, I should have thought.

“Yours ever truly,  
“C. W. D.”

Sir William White's idea seems to have been a Federation of Balkan States supported by an Austrian Alliance. No such Federation could exist for any length of time except under the protection of either Austria or Russia; and the fate of any one Balkan State endeavouring to effect a union (or to destroy one) by force of arms was shown by what took place during the war between Servia and Bulgaria after the bringing together of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia. Austria would not allow Bulgaria to penetrate far into Servia; while Russia was prepared to arrest any too forward a march of Servia into Bulgaria.

A Balkan Confederation in the impossible case of its being strong enough to be self-supporting might be desirable; but if it were only strong enough to present a threatening aspect it could be disposed of by Austria's taking Wallachia and leaving Moldavia to Russia; by Russia's taking Bulgaria and leaving Servia to Austria.

There are writers on this subject who declare that Austria, having already so many Slavonian subjects, would be afraid to increase the number. Sir William White, who knew this question thoroughly, was convinced, on the other hand, that the alleged Slavonisation of Austria constituted no danger whatever to that Power.

Lord Edmond FitzMaurice, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the time, having consulted Sir William White on this subject, received from him the following reply:

“It was a great pleasure for me to receive your last

welcome note, and to read in it that you were desirous of hearing my views about the increase of Slav influence in Austria. It is a subject to which I have lately devoted much attention, as I think its importance is considerable, and it would be a great pity if we were on the wrong scent with regard to it. I have been thinking frequently of writing a private memorandum on the subject of Austria, and mentioned this once, I believe, in one of my private letters to Dilke.

"I shall be but too glad to tell you gradually all that comes under my notice with my usual freedom, should you continue to wish it.

"I am strongly of opinion that all that has been said lately about the Slavonisation of Austria being brought about is more than an exaggeration ; it is actually incorrect. A cry has been uttered by some Germans, taken up by the Opposition (or *Verfassungspartei*), has been re-echoed by some, and even most, of the Consuls at Vienna, and has found credulous listeners at some of the Foreign Embassies and Legations there, but certainly *not* at the German Embassy, the best and most competent judge in the matter.

"The greatest efforts have been made by the alarmist Germans in Austria to get this their view endorsed at Berlin, but hitherto in vain ; and this would be decisive for me, even if other proofs were wanting of the incorrectness of this estimate.

"Of course, it is said at Vienna that this change is brought about by Count Taaffe and his colleagues ; but of these six gentlemen two are well-known Polish patriots, while one only, Pracek, is a Czech. The fact of the matter is, that Austria has to undergo a great many changes to satisfy her Slav subjects, without, on that account, jeopardising her Germanic character ; though, without the adoption of such changes, her very existence becomes precarious. No one knows this better than the great German Chancellor, who has covered with sarcasm the pretensions of the German-Austrian patriots, and does not appear to think that in Austria Slavonisation is making too rapid strides.

"It is not Taaffe and his measures that have created suspicion at Berlin, but rather — and his foreign sympathies, which, no doubt, are Russian. There always has been, and there is still, a pro-Russian party at the Hofburg.

Political partisans who are desirous to upset Taaffe have brought forward and are constantly decrying the Slavonic proclivities of his Government in internal administration, and thus wish to make him odious and suspected throughout Germany. What you appear to have heard, and what I hear constantly, is the echo of this sort of thing ; but a careful study of his measures leads me to the opinion that this estimate is incorrect.

"A Parliamentary Government in a country like Austria, where the Germans are a minority, must be constantly doing something to satisfy the various nationalities constituting the majority ; and as the Ultramontanes and aristocracy happen to side with Taaffe, also the Poles and Slavs and Tyrolese, there is always some new accusation ready at hand against him."

The Slavonians of the Balkan Peninsula both of the Servian and of the Bulgarian variety, have equally their champions in England. It is difficult, however, to understand how either Serbia or Bulgaria can be looked upon as capable of offering any—even the slightest—resistance to Russia.

The much more powerful Roumania might possibly do so. A Russian army, now that Bucharest is strongly fortified, could at least be delayed in front of the Roumanian capital until Austrian troops had time to come up. But without the Austrian Alliance, Roumania would practically be as powerless as Bulgaria or Servia.

In writing to Sir William White at Bucharest, Sir Henry Layard at Constantinople expressed again and again the hope that Roumania, now that she was independent, would cultivate the most friendly relations with Turkey. He seems, indeed, at times to have desired for Roumania a free Alliance with Turkey in place of the vassalage of former days. He looked, however, very suspiciously upon the Slavonian States, with their "unscrupulous and greedy populations," and regarded Roumania

and Hungary as islands in the midst of threatening Slavonian seas, sure to be called upon to defend their liberty and independence in circumstances of great difficulty.

"Roumania," he wrote to Sir William White, "will now, as you say, occupy a very important, and at the same time dangerous position in the midst of the Slav, or Sclavonic<sup>1</sup>-speaking races whose ambitious designs and aspirations have been vastly encouraged by recent events. It will remain for her and Hungary to fight the battle of liberty and national independence against an unscrupulous and greedy people."

Roumania was at this time, just after the recognition of her independence, in considerable danger with her two formidable neighbours; each mindful, no doubt, of the Roumanian territory absorbed by them in former days—from Moldavia on one side, from Wallachia on the other. M. Ghika, son of Prince Jon Ghika, told Sir Henry Layard at Constantinople, that attempts were being made in his country to kindle animosity between

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Layard, like Lord Salisbury, spelt this word in the ancient English way, as sanctioned by standard authors, which is not, however, the way in which it is pronounced, whether among the Slavonians themselves, or among the Germans, French and English of the present day. In France the old word "Esclavon" has long been replaced by "Slave"; probably ever since Miçkiewicz delivered at the Collège de France his admirable course of lectures on "Les Slaves," some sixty years ago. The Slavonians derive their self-given name from *slava*, signifying "glory." The West-Europeans on the other hand have derived from the racial designation of the Slavonian, so often captured and subjugated, such words as *sklave*, *esclave* and *slave*.

A more probable derivation of the name is from *slavo*, a word. The person who uses the word—*slavo*—is the Slavonian. The dumb person, like the foreign person who cannot use the "word," is called *nemets*, which in Russian stands equally for the "dumb" and for the "stranger."



Moldavia and Wallachia; and chiefly in Moldavia, with the view of detaching it from Wallachia.

Bratiano declared to the same ambassador that Bismarck had evidently resolved to make Roumania disappear as an independent state; though whether it was to be given to Austria or to Russia, or divided between the two, he did not know. Lord Salisbury, too, had heard that a project existed by which a great part of Roumania might possibly be absorbed into Hungary; that Wallachian portion, no doubt, which adjoins Transylvania.

Finally Russia had threatened the Roumanians that if they protested against or opposed her demand for a military passage she would occupy Roumania and disarm her troops.

Without actual anarchy, then, there was certainly an anarchical state of things in the Balkan Peninsula, when, in 1880, Lord Granville replaced Lord Salisbury as Foreign Secretary.

Lord Granville does not seem to have written much to Sir William White at Bucharest or elsewhere. Sir William in any case preserved very few of Lord Granville's letters—all brief and to the point, without the least amplification on political subjects.

A letter from Sir William White to Lord Edmond FitzMaurice, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in the government of Mr. Gladstone, has already been given. Here is another of the year 1884, to the same correspondent, in which Sir William speaks of the visit to Bucharest of the Austrian Crown Prince. Lord Edmond had written to him on the "interminable difficulties" he had met with the previous year, in inducing the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to make necessary concessions to Roumanian national feeling in regard to the

navigation of the Danube, and expressing a hope that the visit of the Crown Prince to Bucharest might be the occasion of establishing friendly relations.

“BUCHAREST,

“4th May, 1884.

“MY DEAR FITZMAURICE,

“The Austrian Archduke’s visit here came off extremely well. He and the charming Princess Stephanie appeared delighted—but it is really surprising to feel how little the *vornehmer* Austro-Hungarian knows about this country. — sitting after dinner with the Queen of Roumania, asked H.M. whether the lady sitting close to them could speak anything but Roumanian, and was quite surprised to be told that she could also speak French, German and English equally well. The lady about whom this question was asked was —, the wife of —. The persons of the suite were surprised that Roumania was so large a country; that the educated classes spoke French; that everything was on the European pattern, etc.; in fact, imagined the upper classes here did not know the use of knives and forks, though they did not say so. When one considers the important interests Austria has at stake here, all this is lamentable and perplexing. But the Archduke took full notice of their common interests in his toast at the dinner, and I am sure he went away a wiser man.

“I am told that H.I.H. is more intelligent and more firm in character than his father: his scientific instruction has been more *soignée*, but it is to be feared that he is deficient in that *souplesse* which has contributed so much in enabling the present Emperor to tide over difficulties, and cement that monarchy which had been in such danger, by means of a common loyalty and affection towards the dynasty amongst the different and heterogeneous races which compose it. At Bucharest the Russian Legation tried underhand with some boyards to strike a note hostile to the Hapsburgs, with a view to create some discordance during this Archducal visit. Nothing came of it, but my Austrian colleague was greatly alarmed.”

A new minister, Mr. Kallimaki Katargi, had, a year or two previously, been sent from Bucharest to London,

carrying with him letters to several of Sir William White's English friends.

"Kallimaki" was a name which, in a country where so many Greeks had ruled, could not but suggest "Callimachus" as its origin. Mr. Kallimaki Katargi, however, assured me that he was not of Greek, but of Tartar descent, and that his name was derived from "Calmuck." The Phanariots must have left a very bad reputation in Moldo-Wallachia if it was thought more honourable to be descended from a Calmuck than from a Callimachus.

This minister was a charming man and seemed by no means out of place in modern society, though according to Sir William White there was nothing he regretted so much as not having been born in the Middle Ages.

Modern thought and, above all, modern equality were too much for him. These, however, were mere fantasies of the mind, known only as theoretical ideas to a few of his intimate friends.

The saddest event for Sir William White of the year 1884 was the death of his friend Lord Amphill, the "Odo Russell" of former days. Sir Robert Morier, another warm friend and sincere admirer of Lord Amphill, wrote to Sir William the following letter in reference to the loss they had both sustained :

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I was grateful for your letter about our dear Odo, but I couldn't answer it. I feel his loss more every day."

Among Sir William White's letters I find one written by Mr. Odo Russell just fifty years ago to Mr. de Fonblanque at Belgrade, which is interesting as an example of the formal letter-writing then in vogue—especially, no doubt, in official circles. It is dated November 12, 1851, from Vienna, where Mr. Odo Russell was attached to

the Embassy of Lord Westmorland ; and the ceremonious conclusion preceding the signature is in four lines, where one would now be found sufficient.

“ I have the honour to be,  
                                   “ Sir,  
                                   “ your obedient,  
                                   “ humble servant,  
                                   “ ODO RUSSELL.”

The letter is addressed to Thomas de Grenier de Fonblanque, Esq., with three *etcs.* after his name ; the same Mr. de Fonblanque to whom Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, in still earlier days (1843), gave Mr. Layard a letter of introduction on which, after it had been presented, Mr. de Fonblanque jotted down critical and sarcastic remarks to the disparagement of its presenter.

England had never had an abler representative at Berlin than Lord Ampthill ; and his appointment to the English Embassy in that capital is said to have been in a great measure due to the excellent effect he produced on Prince Bismarck at Versailles, whither he had been sent, as we have seen, towards the end of the Franco-German War to make representations in connection with Russia's announced intention to disregard the Black Sea clause in the Treaty of Paris.

Bismarck was much pleased with what he saw of Mr. Odo Russell at Versailles, and this was held to be, and probably was, a sufficient reason for sending him to Berlin. It might be said that the sort of ambassador whom a foreign minister like Bismarck would prefer, would be one of a soft and yielding disposition. Nevertheless, England had never more influence at Berlin than in the days of Odo Russell, who occupied his important post for some dozen years until his death in 1884. Prince Bismarck speaks of him with marked respect in his *Memoirs*, and

refers to him as one of the few Englishmen he could call to mind who spoke good French without being a bad man. Then, however, he reflects that, by way of corrective, Lord Ampthill spoke excellent German.

Lord Ampthill had all the suavity of the trained diplomatist who has had influence enough to get transferred in his promotion from one great capital to another. I had the pleasure of meeting him several times at Versailles, and once dined in his company at the quarters of a Prussian officer of my acquaintance who had established himself in a house near the outposts, where he had a fine set of apartments, his own cook, and his own well-stocked wine cellar—practically his own, by the sometimes agreeable customs of war.

Lord Ampthill was singularly unlike Sir William White, who had never been stationed at any of the great European capitals; though Warsaw, Belgrade and Bucharest had prepared him admirably for Constantinople. The diplomatic mill turns out excellent men; Lord Ampthill and Sir Robert Morier had both been through it. But for Constantinople the best sort of man is the one who has studied the Eastern Question in all its branches, in all its bearings, and as much as possible on the spot. To have practised diplomacy at Paris and Berlin, at Madrid and Rome, can help but little. The diplomatic routine may give its followers suppleness and style. But for the Eastern Question knowledge of the subject is above all necessary.

Towards the end of 1884 the diplomatic monotony of Sir William White's life at Bucharest was rudely broken into by Lord Granville with a letter from Walmer Castle dated December 22, proposing that he should go to South America.

"Dear White," begins Lord Granville's characteristically laconic epistle, "Should you like me to propose you

to the Queen as H.M.'s representative at Rio or Buenos Ayres? I presume you would prefer the former on account of salary and pension?

"Yours sincerely,  
"GRANVILLE."

It appears from the interesting memoir of Sir William White contributed by Lord Edmond FitzMaurice to the *Speaker* for January 2, 1892, that towards the end of 1884, when a considerable movement took place in the Diplomatic Service, Sir William White was on the point of being promoted to Constantinople. But difficulties were at the last moment interposed,

"Sir Edward Thornton," writes Lord Edmond FitzMaurice, "was transferred from St. Petersburg to the Shores of the Bosphorus. And then for a moment there seemed a chance of Sir William White's career not receiving the appropriate crowning of the edifice. The Legation at Rio fell vacant, and was offered to him by Lord Granville. He hesitated, and had all but accepted, when he one day appeared in my room at the Foreign Office, and asked my advice. I told him that if he persisted in asking it inside the Foreign Office I had of course but one duty, which was to advise him to accept the post which my chief had offered him, but that, if he would walk round the Park with me, I thought we might discuss the question on its merits. With one of his great shouts of laughter he accepted the suggestion, and we started. Then I told him that I thought that at Rio, away from his beloved Roumans, Poles, Croats, Turks, Serbs, Slovenes and Bulgars, he would die of sheer *ennui* in three months; that he had only got to wait a little longer and the big prize must be his; and that if he did not get it, he was a great man at Bucharest and would be comparatively nobody at Rio, though his official dignities might be greater. I had my reward when, at the end of 1886, I received the following letter, dated,

"THE EMBASSY,  
"CONSTANTINOPLE,

"MY DEAR FITZMAURICE,

"I have no news of any kind to give you from

here; but I feel very happy not to have gone to Rio or Pekin in 1884 or 1885.

“‘ Ever yours truly,

“‘ W. A. WHITE.

Another excellent friend of Sir William's, Sir Charles Dilke, wrote to him as follows about the Rio business :

“ MY DEAR WHITE,

“ I am very glad you're *not* going into South American exile. That's all I can say.

“ Yours,

“ C. W. D.”

Of the year 1884 in connection with Mr. White there is little to add. It may be mentioned, however, that in this year, when he was still at Bucharest, an endeavour was made to introduce at Constantinople the greatest reform that had been attempted since the abortive proclamation of the Turkish constitution. Eight years had passed since the sittings of the Constantinople Conference which had witnessed the promulgation, to the sound of artillery, of the measure guaranteeing to all Christian as to all Turkish subjects every kind of civil and religious liberty. It was now proposed to establish a national postal system; and a note was addressed to the representatives of the Great Powers informing them that the foreign post-offices hitherto tolerated must now be suppressed, Turkey having taken steps for establishing a General Post-office of her own. This ambitious project, however, proved a hopeless failure; and the privileges of foreign governments in regard to the collection and distribution of letters were not again interfered with until nearly twenty years later when another false move in the same direction was made.

Though nothing took place from 1881 to 1884 that demanded Sir William White's immediate diplomatic attention, troubles of a menacing kind arose between Serbia and Bulgaria. The affairs of Serbia no longer concerned Sir William White in any direct manner now that he was Minister at Bucharest. But the little misunderstanding between the two neighbouring Slavonian States gradually assumed a character which menaced the tranquillity of the whole Balkan Peninsula.

It was understood that Russia would interfere no more with the development of the new Balkan States, which maintained friendly relations with one another until the summer of 1884, when trouble occurred between Bulgaria and Serbia in connection with a number of Servian refugees, who, in spite of the protests of the Servian Government, had been allowed to pass the winter in the Bulgarian towns adjoining Servian territory.

A dispute, moreover, arose about a corner of frontier land called Bregova, so small that it was overlooked by the Plenipotentiaries at Berlin. Bregova had belonged to Serbia before the Conference; and, though it lay on the Bulgarian bank of the river Timok, now dividing Serbia from the newly created Bulgaria, it was still guarded by a couple of Servian sentinels. Six years after the signing of the Berlin Treaty, in the summer of 1884, the few acres held by Serbia on the wrong side of the stream were entered by a Bulgarian regiment, the Servian sentinels retiring before it.

Servia now ceased diplomatic relations with Bulgaria. But the two princes—Alexander and Milan—exchanged letters and soon came to an ingenious arrangement by which the Bulgarian regiment occupying Bregova was to be withdrawn and replaced for one hour by a Servian regiment. Then the Servian regiment was in its turn



to be marched back, after which the question as to the ownership of the Bregova field was to be referred to the Great Powers.

Nothing could have been fairer on both sides. But the Bulgarian Premier refused to be bound by the arrangement which Prince Alexander had accepted; and as a constitutional sovereign, the Chief of the Bulgarian State had to bow to the decision of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

Negotiations, however, were still going on, when suddenly the Servians heard of the revolution at Philipopolis by which Northern Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia became united and the population of Bulgaria doubled in number. Instead of rejoicing at the formation of a strong Bulgaria in the interest of Slavism generally, Servia felt indignant at Bulgaria's increase of power and prepared to attack her.

For Bulgaria, a state for the most part Slavonian, wished now to take precedence of Servia, the Slavonian State *par excellence* of the Balkan Peninsula; and this could not be endured. The Bulgarians began by retreating; and the Servians, following them, occupied Slivnitza.

Prince Alexander had not enough troops in hand. But he saw that if he could only delay the Servian attack for a day or two, he should be able to repel it. Then, hurrying up fresh regiments, keeping the Servians meanwhile at bay, he at last on the third day inflicted on his enemy a signal defeat. But he was not allowed to pursue the beaten foe. Austria and Russia had both been looking on, and the Austrian Consul-General at Belgrade informed Prince Alexander that if he advanced any farther he would find himself confronted by Austrian troops, while the Russians would at the same time take

up a position in his rear. The war was now at an end.

The conflict between Servia and Bulgaria was admirably calculated to bring into disrepute the petty States formed out of the remains of what Sir Henry Layard insisted to the last on calling "Turkey in Europe."

## CHAPTER XVII

### AN EVENTFUL YEAR

EIGHTEEN hundred and eighty-five was the year of Sir William White's appointment as Ambassador *ad interim* to the Porte, the year also of the election of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria to the Governorship of Eastern Roumania, and of the war between Bulgaria and Servia, to which the bringing together of the two Bulgarias naturally led.

What changes had taken place in European Turkey since 1875, the year of Sir William White's arrival at Belgrade. Then Servia was still a vassal State without any apparent intention of drawing the sword against her Turkish suzerain, while Bulgaria was not even a 'geographical expression,' but merely the name sometimes given to a vague region inhabited by Bulgarians, Greeks and others in varying proportions. He had seen European Turkey destroyed by the Treaty of San Stefano, and only partly restored by the Treaty of Berlin.

Russia, meanwhile, had in the Balkan Peninsula gained nothing from Turkey except the Dobrudja, of which she made a compensatory present to Roumania, while depriving her ally of the corner of Bessarabia ceded to Moldavia after the Crimean War.

Servia had acquired her independence (apart only from formal recognition by the European Powers) before Mr. White left Belgrade; and Roumania had practically gained hers before his arrival at Bucharest.

While Roumania and Servia became independent, Bosnia and the Herzegovina passed beneath the "protection" of Austria; a solid acquisition for the "protecting" State, since though at first Austria was only to "administer" the two provinces, this did not prevent her from raising taxes and levying troops in her new possessions.

Thus as one of the results of the Panslavist Crusade, Bosnia and the Herzegovina—two purely Slavonian countries—became lost to the Slavonians.

If the States of the Balkan Peninsula should ever form a general confederation, Bosnia would be out of it; while if a specially Slavonic Confederation, apart from Greece and Roumania, should be brought about, Bosnia will be equally out of that.

The political Panslavic cry of 1877 could not, of course, include Roumania; and it was not strong enough to save Bosnia. Nor did the Slavonic brotherhood which should have bound together Servia and Bulgaria prevent these little states on small provocation from falling upon one another's throats.

In the days before Panslavism, Roumanians, Slavonians and Greeks were all, as "Greek Christians," under the political patronage (if not legal protection) of Russia. Now, between the three great nationalities of the Balkan Peninsula, endless jealousies and dissensions have arisen.

It must in fairness be admitted that in their darkest days these oppressed nationalities looked for succour and aid to Russia—nor looked in vain. The late Eugene Schuyler, in his excellent *History of Peter the Great* dwells on the fact, as testifying to the sincerity of the Russians in their sympathy for the Eastern Christians, that the first combination against Turkey in which Orthodox Russia took part was formed under the auspices of the Pope, with two Catholic Powers, Austria and Poland, as

leading members of the league. Peter the Great's father, moreover, Alexis Mikhailowitch (son of Mikhail or Michael, first of the Romanoffs) had previously endeavoured, though in vain, to bring about a general European alliance against the Turks ; and there was no more reason for accusing him of interested motives than for bringing a similar charge against him in connection with his offers of troops, money and a safe asylum to Charles I.

The Russian sovereigns have again and again given help to their co-religionaries of the Turkish Empire ; often at a time when the members of the Greek Church were scarcely regarded as fellow Christians by the Church of Rome.

At first the Russians looked for nothing in return. But how could they help those they were protecting except by entering into alliance with them ? And in any alliance so formed, was it not natural and inevitable that Russia should be the principal ally ? In time the chief partner in the alliance began consciously to exercise pressure, until at last, towards the end of the eighteenth century, Catherine II. looked upon the "Greek Christians" merely as counters in the game she was playing. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Alexander I. proclaimed the annexation of Moldavia and Wallachia to the Russian Empire—though without being able to incorporate them in his dominions. At the making of peace, however, he detached from Moldavia the province of Bessarabia, which Turkey had no lawful power to cede and Alexander still less right to claim.

Russia was now playing a political part in Turkey for her own advantage. But the Eastern Christians still looked to her and her alone for assistance ; and there might still, but for Russia, have been no Eastern Question.

The visit of the Bulgarian delegates to London in 1876 seemed quite a novelty. But, like so many apparent novelties, this was only a revival. Emissaries from various parts of Turkey had ever since the Turkish Conquest visited the West in quest of assistance and with plans for the expulsion of the Turks from Europe.

As time went on and Turkey became less powerful these agents, more or less authorised, increased in number until towards the end of the seventeenth century the representative of the oppressed Christians in Turkey became in political circles a figure comparable to that of the distressed Pole of 1831, or the Hungarian refugee of 1849.

Apart from the feeble action in Western Europe of volunteer diplomatists from Greece, Servia, and even Armenia, direct communications were constantly kept up between the clergy of Moscow and the Patriarchs of Constantinople; and when Peter the Great sent for the first time a Resident Ambassador to the Turkish Capital the Turks at once saw in Tolstoy—the personage in question—the embodiment of a great danger in the future.

“My residence is not pleasant to them,” wrote the ancestor of the great writer of the same name, “because their domestic enemies, the Greeks, are our co-religionaries. The Turks are of opinion that by living among them I shall excite the Greeks to rise against Mussulmans, and therefore the Greeks are forbidden to have intercourse with me. The Christians have become so frightened that none of them dare even pass the house in which I live.”

The Greeks, Servians and Armenians who came to Western Europe for purposes of study as well as with a view to the liberation of the Christians suffering persecution in the regions of the Unfaithful, brought with them schemes for the partition of Turkey and for the redistribution of

its territory among the nations of the West. Seraphim, who had studied at Oxford, who enjoyed the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and who published in London a revised edition of the New Testament, had a project of dismemberment in which France, Spain, Abyssinia and Greece were to take part ; Constantinople and Anatolia being assigned to France, Syria and Jerusalem to Spain, Egypt to Abyssinia, Macedonia and the islands to Greece.

It was to Russia, however, that the representatives of the Greek Christians usually addressed themselves. England had no interest at the time in connection with Constantinople—our Indian Empire had yet to be created ; and, in the various schemes of dismemberment proposed, England's active co-operation was not even asked for.

Apart, indeed, from our sympathy with Greece, as Greece, in the days of Byron, no one in England bestowed a thought upon the condition and aspirations of the Eastern Christians in Turkey. Lord Strangford in 1863, in his admirable additional chapter to Lady Strangford's *Eastern Shores of the Adriatic*, was the first English writer to call attention to the general awakening among them, just then becoming noticeable. But the English nation as a whole remained indifferent to their fate, until suddenly it was filled with indignation and horror by the news of the Bulgarian massacres.

The Bulgarians had long before that signal for their liberation been the pet children of Lord Strangford, who may fairly be said to have discovered them. He looked upon them as better for practical purposes than Slavonians of a finer breed ; a Finnish alloy giving them, as to the Russians themselves, a consistency and power of resistance in which the pure-blooded Slavonian is supposed to be wanting.

Sir William White considered it not only an error, but a culpable error to believe that the Christian populations liberated from Turkish rule must of necessity fall beneath the domination of Russia ; and the alternative he appears to have held in view was a Balkan Confederation under the protection of Austria.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### BULGARIA AND ROUMELIA

WHEN in 1885 Prince Alexander of Bulgaria was elected to the governorship of Eastern Roumelia or "Southern Bulgaria," as it was henceforth to be called, it seemed as though the whole of the Eastern Question was about to be re-opened. England and Russia were equally puzzled by the event, and each Power thought the other responsible for it.

The news of the union of the two Bulgarias and of the apathy with which the intelligence was received by the Porte took Lord Salisbury by surprise. But he soon saw that the true policy of England was to support the combination and help the Bulgarians, North and South, to maintain their independence.

Sir William White, temporarily at Constantinople but expecting at any moment to be sent back to Bucharest, received from Lord Salisbury this note :

"FOREIGN OFFICE,

"*Sept.* 30., 1885.

"DEAR SIR WILLIAM WHITE,

"In the presence of this crisis I have asked Sir E. Thornton not to go to Constantinople for the present, as the matter had better not be taken out of your hands. I hope you will stay there till the atmosphere is a little clearer."

All through the months of September and October Sir William White's position was uncertain. His appoint-

ment was only *ad interim*. There was just then no permanent Ambassador at Constantinople. But, in addition to Sir William White as Ambassador *ad interim*, a special Ambassador had been sent out in the person of Sir Drummond Wolff, whose difficulties, according to Lord Salisbury, were very great, "more owing to our political position in England than to any other cause."

"It is like the difficulty," continued Lord Salisbury, "that a man has in getting credit from the neighbouring tradesmen when he is only staying at an hotel. Nevertheless, I think the mission is doing good, and is dissipating a good deal of suspicion."

Lord Salisbury, moreover, thanked Sir William for "the hearty and vigorous assistance" he was giving to the mission, and added :

"I should be very glad if I had an opportunity of liquidating the debts under which I feel we stand to you for the public service you have done both now and at other times in the past. I will gladly take such an opportunity if I have it. I may mention confidentially to you that Her Majesty has expressed to me strongly her opinions in favour of your claims. I hope some practicable arrangement may be thought of."

As soon as it became evident that the enlarged Bulgaria wished to be self-governing and to dispense, therefore, as much as possible with assistance and advice from Russia, then the enlarged Bulgaria was looked upon with favour in England; and Sir William White in the fulfilment of his mission took it as much as possible under his care. It was perfectly right that this should be so, in the interest of England, of Turkey and of Bulgaria itself. But it was natural, perhaps, that the Russians should feel annoyed.

One of the ablest of Sir William White's correspondents,

Sir Robert Morier, suggested to him in a series of most interesting letters from St. Petersburg, that since Russia and England had professedly the same object in view—the welfare, that is to say, of the Bulgarians—some joint course of action might possibly be devised to which neither Power could logically object.

Our Ambassador in Russia believed, at the time, like the Russians themselves, that the union of the two Bulgarias was due to some action or suggestion on the part of England. But Lord Salisbury had at first condemned it as likely to lead to fresh complications and possibly a renewal of war; which did not prevent him, when he saw that the union could not be undone, from supporting the Bulgarians and helping them to maintain their independence within their new frontiers.

It has been seen that Sir Henry Layard predicted from the first a union of the two Bulgarias; which, according to him, would be brought about through Russian agency. A union by the means through which it was really accomplished had been foreseen neither by Sir Henry Layard nor by the English, nor by the Russian Government. It took every one by surprise.

Here, meanwhile, is the first of Sir Robert Morier's letters on the subject :

" ST. PETERSBURG,  
" 19th Nov., 1885.

" MY DEAR WHITE,

" I meant to write you a long letter, the gist of which would have been the expression of my dissatisfaction with the very strong line taken by H.M.'s Government in going against the *status quo ante*. I am not speaking of you, than whom no one could have done better in carrying out a line quite clear and statesmanlike but, in my opinion, wrong.

" I have only three minutes and cannot develop my theme. But in a few words I will say that our Asiatic

concerns are for me *en première ligne*—our rivalry with Russia in Europe *en seconde ligne*, and very far behind. We were beginning very well in Asia. If the rivalry in Europe gets more and more accentuated we shall fare ill.

"One word more. I am convinced Russia does *not* want a general war in Europe about Turkey now, and that she is really suffering from a gigantic *Katzenjammer* caused by the last war. We should make her task easy for her.

"Please write to me by messenger. He leaves London every other Wednesday—next Wednesday, which will be soon.

"Yours ever,  
"R. B. MORIER."

The Ambassador at St. Petersburg received from the acting ambassador at Constantinople the following reply :

"CONSTANTINOPLE,  
"7 Dec., 1885.

"MY DEAR MORIER,

"I wish I could have had a safe opportunity (*i.e.* a bag) available earlier for the purpose of replying properly and fully to your kind lines of Nov. 19, so as to disabuse you, and set your mind straight on certain points of our policy here. First of all as regards M. de Giers. H. E. is certainly a most peacefully disposed and conciliatory Russian Foreign Minister, but he will only remain in office as long as the policy of the Empire has *an interim* character and is in a state of transition. He is not a star, and is spoken of very lightly by all his Russian subordinates in the Service. Nothing we can do or not do will affect his official career, the duration of which entirely depends on the relations of his Imperial master with Vienna or Berlin.

"Nelidoff imagines himself one of the possible heirs to de Giers's succession ; and his neurosity and ambitious views have combined with the Czar's personal vindictiveness against Prince Alexander, in no small degree, to embitter matters here and to complicate an *imbroglio*

which will certainly not turn out to Russia's political advantage.

"The Czar was at Copenhagen during the second part of last Sept., and M. de Giers in the Tyrol. Accordingly, Nelidoff put himself in direct communication with the Emperor, and his ambition then began to soar very high.

"*Il s'est fait fort* to master the ill-timed popular movement, recommending the drastic measure of recalling all the Russian officers from Bulgaria, and suggesting the informal meetings of ambassadors at Therapia. In fact he appeared to be having everything his own way; and he confided to a mutual friend that there was 'a great future' before him. At that time, and up to Oct. 10 or 15, they were favourable here, at Vienna and at Berlin to the personal union. If Russia had agreed the whole thing would have been over by this time. But Nelidoff would not have it so. He carries completely some of the ambassadors here with him; and their theories as to popular movements make me fancy sometimes that I am living in the time of Verona, Carlsbad and Troppau. They speak of 'the poor Bulgarians oppressed by a few adventurers, and sighing to be allowed to return to legal order.' Their language is the same as was old Metternich's; and, later on, Bomba's about Neapolitans and Sicilians. Nelidoff tries to persuade every one, and he has evidently succeeded in persuading his Imperial Master and de Giers, that the threat of a Turkish military execution will be sufficient by itself to restore the Sultan's authority in Eastern Roumelia. But that is not true, and never was; *and it is certainly not the case now*. Hence the theory of the loaded gun of which you speak so often in one of your despatches (No. 384 B). But, the premises being false, Russian policy in this question must arrive at fatal results. The *status quo ante* never could (since Oct. last) be re-established in Eastern Roumelia and cannot be *now*.

"A Turkish execution, to which Nelidoff is pushing and urging the Sultan by every means in his power, may subdue the Bulgarians for a time, but will bring on with it some disaster or other, which will be resented by Russia in such a way, you may be sure, that M. de Giers will find it extremely difficult to remain in office.

"It is not our attitude but his own policy of counting

on threats and recommending a concentration of 80,000 fine Turkish troops at Adrianople which will jeopardise his official position.

"If Nelidoff had taken the least trouble to seek for a formula at the Conference which might have ensured unanimity he might have got one. But he wanted to carry things with a high hand, thought the *status quo ante* could be reimposed by threats, and landed Russia where she now is, recommending the Turk to put down with the sword in his own fashion *Christian orthodox Slavs*.

"You will soon hear the cry from Moscow, that this could only happen under the rule of a Lutheran Foreign minister, or I am much mistaken. It is only the Sultan's personal antipathy to the dangers he may be incurring that has hitherto prevented Abdul Hamid from resorting to the use of force and taking the advice of Nelidoff *et consortes*.

"By the time you receive these lines he may have yielded, and blood may be flowing. *Yes*, blood shed under Russia's dictation; or wiser counsels may prevail and negotiations with Prince Alexander may already have been initiated.

"As to the line we have adopted, I am sure you must approve of it. The future European Turkey—to Adrianople, at any rate—must, sooner or later, belong to Christian races. There is no example in history, since the siege of Vienna, two centuries ago, of the Turk's having regained any inch of soil that he has once yielded to native races. Is Eastern Roumelia to constitute an exception to this rule? We have always been accused by Russia and her agents in the East of being the chief obstacles to the emancipation of Christian races in European Turkey. The reasons for a particular line of policy on our part have fortunately ceased to exist, and we are free to act impartially and to take up gradually, with proper restraints, the line which made Palmerston famous in regard to Belgium, Italy, etc. The Russians have made sacrifices to liberate Greece, Servia and the Principalities. But they have lost all their influence in Greece, Servia and Roumania.

"Montenegro alone has remained faithful and grateful.

"They are now about to lose the Bulgarians. They accuse us of trying to supplant them in the affection

of these people. Like most of the accusations sown broadcast against *la perfide Albion* in Russia, these charges are either untrue or shallow, and will not bear critical examination. These newly emancipated races want to breath free air and not through Russian nostrils. *A qui la faute?* The Russian official world looks upon its own system as perfect; but others cannot see it in this light. The real genuine Slav hatred in Russia is, by the way, against the Germans; though it suits the Court and the official world to direct it against England.

“I feel, of course, that all these things may have a *contre-coup* in Asia, but we cannot shape our course in Europe by purely Asiatic considerations. Of course, our great interests are there; but we still have European duties and a European position, and even European interests.”

Then came this rejoinder :

“ST. PETERSBURG,  
“27 Dec., 1885.

“MY DEAR WHITE,

“Your letter of the 7th inst. just received has given me the liveliest satisfaction. It has cleared up what was before quite obscure, and given me the key to the enigma which I had vainly sought; how, with the undoubted, all-prevailing desire here to avoid a great fire there, they did not jump on to the golden bridge made for them in Conference, and, instead, contributed so much to the risk of the match being put to the magazine by a *bond fide* intervention of Turkey. I was sure the key would be found in a personal intrigue; and if Nelidoff's game was to unseat Giers, *tout est dit*.

“I need not say that I take a different view of our policy now from what I did when I wrote my last letter. I had not seen enough of it then to judge it correctly. What I saw was a unisonous *Parteinahme*, on the part of the Press of all shades for Bulgarians as such. I saw what seemed the sudden change from the standing-ground of the Treaty of Berlin to that of Bulgarian atrocity-mongering, and feared this was another instance of the curse inseparable from our foreign policy;

the shaping of it, not for the good of the country, but for momentary Parliamentary effect.

"Having no faith in the Panslavist heroes of the Roumelian revolution, and being naturally unable to guess what the Bulgarian nation led by a German Prince was capable of on the field of battle, I certainly thought our right policy would have been to stick to the Treaty of Berlin and take the sudden conversion of Russia to the sacred obligation of treaties *au sérieux*. I believed then, and, I confess, I still believe now (for without our moral support, Prince Alexander could not have played the dangerous game he did) that the perfectly unanimous pressure of Europe, had it been *at once* seriously exercised, would have sufficed without a Turkish army of occupation to restore the *status quo ante*, which I certainly deemed the lesser of the many looming evils. I did not, of course, for one moment suppose that Lord Salisbury was going in for a vulgar imitation of the G. O. M. Bulgarian atrocity No-policy; but I did think it possible that he might not resist the great temptation of dishing the Russians, taking the cards with all the trumps out of their hands, winning the game, and pocketing the stakes.

"I saw arising a great crisis of rivalry between the mammoth Empires in connection with the Oriental Question, and this at the very moment when I had arrived at St. Petersburg penetrated (and this will give you the key of my attitude) with the conviction that the one object I ought to try and compass was at the very least to secure a *modus vivendi* between the two Governments. . . .

"Was it unnatural that I should think Bulgarians hardly worth the jeopardising so important an object? For a game of rivalry it has been—it was instinctively felt to be such here. The very great prudence shown by Lord Salisbury and the consummate ability (*passer moi l'expression*) with which you played your part have made it a successful game; but the one crowning good fortune which we mainly owe to the incalculable folly of the Servian attack has been that Prince Alexander's generalship and the fighting capacities of his Bulgaro-Roumelian soldiers have placed our rival action in perfect harmony with the crushing logic of facts. The rivalry is thus completely swamped in the bit of cosmic work so successfully accomplished. A state has been evolved out of the



protoplasm of Balkan Chaos—a living joint been added to the European megatherion—and we can wear the wreathed smiles of a successful *sage femme* at a christening, and boast that we alone had foretold that it would be a beautiful live child, and that it was one that we had successfully midwived.

"This, though not in these exact words, is the language which *dans l'intimité* I have used to Giers. I have of course never admitted the possibility of rivalry. I have said that Russia and Great Britain are the only two countries who will go hand in hand in this matter. We start, it is true, from different principles, but we follow the same end; 'you from your sympathy for your kindred; we from our sympathy for people struggling to be free and for the right to shape their own destinies. Why, instead of looking out for every point on which we can disagree, not fix our eyes on those on which we can agree? I quite admit that governments cannot shape their course by abstract principles, however noble and however sound; but in this matter by deviating from *your* principles, whilst we have stuck to *ours*, you have been fighting against living forces which will prove too strong for you, whereas we have been fighting with those forces at our back.'

"I have not of course supposed that I could produce any effect by such arguments; this was not *dans mon rôle*. I had nothing to do with the fighting; that was your business at the seat of war. But I believe, within my sphere and with a view to the future, that a friendly and sympathetic attitude of this kind and an attempt to place fairly before H.M.G. the Russian point of view, from which Giers so far as he has been able has acted, was more statesmanlike than had I made myself a violent partizan of Prince Alexander and his Bulgarians.

"Then I must confess to a congenital hatred of unfairness. To ignore the fact, as is done by every blessed official and non-official, by every paper and every sect in England, that the Bulgarians and other Balkan populations owe their actual independence from Turkey, and the prospect of their future autonomy, to the blood and treasure of Russia, is the culmination of unfairness, and from my point of view at the same time grossly stupid. For what good was ever got by refusing to look facts in the face? To get into hysterics, as certain people do, when the word *Panslavism* is mentioned seems to me the supreme of

absurdity. Panslavism is a force, and, like every other force, is potent for good or evil. Will it survive in the great struggle for existence? or will it succumb to pan-Germanism? Is it in our interest that it should put forth its strength in Europe, or be driven eastwards and put forth its strength in Asia? These are the questions which are interesting me and which I am trying to understand, or at least to ascertain how far they are understandable; and it is on these questions that I yearn to have a great fulness of talk with you, because you only could give me a real guidance.

"But all this is not politics. As regards the immediate present, I quite agree with you that it's all to the good that the idiotic Russian bureaucrats, after shedding the blood of hundreds of thousands of wretched peasants on the Balkan ranges, should have so managed as to earn the bitter hatred of the people they have by this blood made free. If we can help to build up these people into a bulwark of independent states and thus screen the sick man at Constantinople from the fury of the northern blast, for God's sake do it—as long as you do it in the natural course of business, and called thereto in your character as one of the great European signatories, but don't go for it as a special British Mission. This is what I think Lord Salisbury and you have succeeded in doing, and why I so highly commend you. Only don't make this the one goal and object of your policy. Don't let your wheels heat from the rate at which you go. Don't forget that for us, after all, India is the *dernier mot*, and that we must never so *embourber* ourselves in Europe as to lose our liberty of action in Asia. In other words, we can only finally settle with Russia by a war of the most portentous proportions or by an *Auseinandersetzung* in which each shall have a fair share. Don't make the latter impossible until you see your way quite clearly to the former, and don't think of the former unless you can get a huge European coalition against the Colossus pressing down on the west.

"To make a practical application you have had a great, an enormous diplomatic success. If we get safe out of the wood (and we are still in it), if you build up a Bulgaria under Prince Alexander without more bloodshed, if you succeed in establishing intimate relations between this Bulgaria and Roumania, the two only *living* states

thereabouts, and get them to make of Silistria a common fortress garrisoned by both, like Mayence in the days of the deceased Confederation (a favourite idea of mine) you will have done the greatest feat of diplomacy of the highest kind which has been performed since poor Hudson obtained for England a more influential position in Italy than France after Solferino.

"Having done all this, or at least a great part of it, don't degenerate into partizanship and egg on Prince Alexander against Russia or throw obstacles in the way of reconciliation. Thanks to his good sword, he has made it impossible that he should ever again be treated as a vassal. To keep up a state of chronic hostility between the new Bulgaria and Russia would serve no earthly purpose—except forcing us to take up the *rôle* of permanent godfather, and thus to establish a permanent state of hostility between us and Russia which, I think, from my point of view, would be a fatal mistake. These views are not held in certain high quarters, and I am in very bad odour for holding them. But I feel sure you will agree with me.

"Yours sincerely,  
"R. B. MORIER."

The year 1885 was a critical one not only for the two Bulgarias and for Servia, but also for Afghanistan, and the relations between England and Russia in connection with Central Asia; and the one dangerous situation seems to have influenced and to have been influenced by the other—to the advantage of peace. Sir William White had of course nothing to do with Central Asian affairs. But the Central Asian Question and what is generally known as the Eastern Question are closely connected; and in a private letter of the year 1885, when the Pendjeh matter was still unsettled, Sir William sums up the Russian policy in Central Asia very briefly by saying that its object is to bring the Russian and English frontiers close together, so that Russia, with a long military line, which she could well afford to keep up, may

be in contact with a long military line which England could only with difficulty maintain ; ready at any moment to provoke a breach of the peace if her interests in the direction of Constantinople should seem to demand it.

Here the line of policy presents itself which Sir Robert Morier in his correspondence with Sir William White was so fond of advocating : That England should accommodate herself to Russia in Europe in order not to be disturbed by her in Asia.

Trustworthy English statesmen seem now to hold that Austria and Italy are chiefly interested in stopping the advance of Russia towards Constantinople. But at a critical moment England would be interested in aiding them, and Russia thinks it advisable to take steps in Central Asia against the strong probability of such aid being rendered. As Sir Robert Morier was never so energetic in recommending his favourite policy as when he was Ambassador at St. Petersburg, it may be presumed that it was in harmony with the views of the Russian Ministers, by whom he was highly appreciated and much liked. But, according to Sir William White, to give way too much to Russia in Europe would be to enable her to force us to give way to her in Asia.

Nearly sixty years ago, in 1844, the Emperor Nicholas, in the course of his visit to England, proposed, not that Russia should be allowed a free hand in her dealings with Turkey, but that Russia and England should take no action in Turkish affairs except by agreement. His Majesty did not at all stipulate that Russia should have Constantinople ; but he declared, naturally enough, in view of her Black Sea communications, that Russia could not allow any other Power to establish herself there in lieu of Turkey. According to that remarkable work, *Étude Diplomatique sur la Guerre de Crimée*, written

by Baron Jomini, and published by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Emperor Nicholas engaged, in consideration of a clear understanding between Russia and England on the subject of Turkey, to leave untouched the three Khanates of Khiva, Bokhara and Kokand ; and the author adds that after the Crimean War and the war against Persia by which the Crimean War was followed, Russia for the first time since 1844 felt herself at liberty to pursue in Central Asia the line of policy which she has since been carrying out.

Anticipating Sir Robert Morier's policy, the Emperor Nicholas wished England to show herself accommodating in Europe in order that Russia should not disturb her in Asia. But the accommodation required in Europe at a critical moment was too great ; it included a protectorate over the Greek Christians in Turkey and a temporary occupation (which, the Roumanians are convinced would have become a permanent one) of the Danubian principalities ; the independent Roumania of the present day.

Thirty years after the Crimean War, Sir Robert Morier thought Russia and England, both professing the greatest interest in Bulgaria, should work together towards the advancement of its prosperity. But the welfare of Bulgaria consisted, according to the Russian view, in its dependence upon Russia ; according to the English view, in its absolute independence.

It may be here remarked that in criticising the policy of his esteemed friend, Sir Robert Morier, as in his contests with Nelidoff at Constantinople and his frequent opposition to Russian policy in the Balkan Peninsula, Sir William White was influenced by no general prejudice against the Russians. To be convinced of this it is only necessary to remember his attitude at Warsaw,

where to the conciliatory measures of the Grand-Duke Constantine and the important reforms introduced under the Grand-Duke's auspices he gave, equally with Lord Napier at St. Petersburg, the warmest possible support.

Meanwhile—to return from political theories to historical facts—the three days' war between Servia and Bulgaria was like a fight between two street urchins, tolerated for a time by two grown-up lookers-on, who as soon as the battle became serious threatened to punch the combatants' heads unless they desisted : whereupon they left off.

Prince Alexander's military success ought, one would have thought, to have strengthened his position. But a series of plots were formed against him ; and nine months after his victory at Slivnitza he was surprised in his palace by a band of conspirators, compelled to sign an act of abdication, and forcibly removed from the country over which he had been called upon to reign.

The Russians showed themselves quite prepared for the event, and at once sent Prince Dolgorouky to Bulgaria to take charge of the government—ordering him back, however, when it was found that Prince Alexander had returned. It was avowedly in order to conciliate Russia that Prince Alexander finally disappeared.

The English Consul-General at Sofia, Captain Jones, V.C., a man of great energy, did all that was possible to encourage the Prince and to discourage his opponents. But as Russia did not wish Prince Alexander to remain, and as he appears himself to have been under the impression that he had received his crown from Russia, he was obliged to go.

Just after Prince Alexander's return to Bulgaria the English Consul-General sent a telegram to Sir William White at Constantinople, asking him whether there was any likelihood of a Turkish occupation ; to which a

negative reply was sent. What the Bulgarians most feared was a Russian occupation, the true suzerain of Bulgaria being at that time not the Sultan of Turkey but the Tsar of Russia. Had not Prince Alexander himself said that he "owed his crown to Russia"?

But who would have supported Prince Alexander had he remained in Bulgaria? Not his own army; not in any practical manner the population of Bulgaria—by its Parliament badly represented, by its Government betrayed; not the Sultan; not any one of the powers under whose auspices the Prince had been elected: only Captain Jones.

The policy pursued by England in connection with Prince Alexander's final disappearance from Bulgaria was a strictly legal one. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Iddesleigh, instructed Sir William White at Constantinople to call the Sultan's attention to the fact that Prince Alexander had quitted Bulgaria, a vassal state of the Sultan; and that the country whose chief had acknowledged the Sultan as his suzerain was now without a ruler.

But the Sultan didn't mind; and to have urged upon him the adoption of any definite course would have been by implication to promise him support.

Here are two interesting letters addressed to Sir William White on the subject (with occasionally a necessary omission) by Lord Iddesleigh.

*"August 27, 1886.*

"DEAR SIR W. WHITE,

"Writing to you just now is rather like shooting an arrow into the air, but I send a line to express a hope that you will keep me fully and confidentially informed of what goes on in Bulgaria, and will favour me with your appreciation of the bearing of these events upon the general question of Eastern policy. From my conversation with the German and Austrian representatives, I gather that they would rather prefer that the Prince

should not come back again. 'If he does not return,' said Count Hatzfeldt, 'matters will be easily arranged; but if he does, there will be difficulties from the side of Russia.' He would not attempt to say precisely what Russia would do, but he shrugged his shoulders significantly. I told them I considered that the Porte ought to summon the Prince to come back and restore order, but that I found it would not do anything. Turkey, he said, was mortally afraid of Russia, and would do nothing to irritate her. Besides, Russia did not worry the Porte with questions of reform as we did. She went to war sometimes, and took a morsel of land, but then left them to repose. England did not take the land, but she destroyed the repose. . . .

"In great haste,

"Yours faithfully,

"IDDESLEIGH."

"Dec. 30, 1886.

"DEAR SIR W. WHITE,

"The Bulgarian delegates have arrived here, and I have had a long conversation with them, if it is to be called a conversation, *ubi tu pulsas ego vapulo tantum*, for I said very little beyond expressing general sympathy and asking a few questions. I met Stoiloff later in the evening. He expressed a hope that they would not be allowed to return 'empty handed.' I told him I thought their visits to the different capitals had done great good to their cause by showing Europe what manner of men they were (I did not use that expression, but it was what I meant to convey), and that their objects were patriotic and reasonable. What did they think we could do for them? They must remember that an ostentatious display of interest on our part was likely to do them more harm than good. They evidently hanker after some encouragement on the part of one or two at least of the Powers which would enable them to proceed at once to the election of a Prince (not necessarily P. Alexander); and if he were refused by one or more powers they would go on *quand même*. I explained to him that we could not in such a case afford them material support, and should only have done them an injury. There is no doubt that the problem is an extremely complicated one."



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE EVER-CHANGING EASTERN QUESTION

**A**FTER Lord Salisbury's return to office in 1886 there was little to engage his attention in the East, and the first letter from his pen to be found in Sir William White's collection is dated 1887.

It dealt with an inquiry put by Sir William White as to whether the Bulgarian Regents should be encouraged to take advantage of the existing lull and of Russia's apparent moderation, to settle up the Bulgarian Question.

Lord Salisbury could only repeat the advice which he had given to the Bulgarian delegates in London : not to quarrel with Russia, but not to give up any fragment of their independence.

Sir William White thought time was on the side of the Bulgarians ; that Austria and Russia were more likely to go further asunder than to come nearer together, and that Austria, therefore, would probably work more with Bulgaria in the future.

According to some of Sir William White's German friends, Russia was becoming disgusted with the ungrateful kinsfolk she had liberated, and now looked forward to a complete vassalage of the Porte as the best means of obtaining full power over the Straits and the Black Sea.

Towards the middle of April, 1887, Sir W. White received from Lord Salisbury a humorous letter setting

forth that, according to representations made to him, the interests of the English holders of Turkish bonds were being neglected.

"I promised," continued the letter, "to represent the bond-holder to you in a favourable light, as the embodiment and expression of the Sultan's financial good faith. But at the same time I warned Bouverie that nothing was at present to be got for him—especially out of the tributes of Bulgaria and E. Roumelia. The utmost we can offer him is a tender, but perfectly platonic, expression of sympathy."

A letter addressed about this time to Sir W. White from an eminent Statesman, on the general aspect of European affairs contained this remarkable passage :

"The present aspect of European affairs is rather puzzling. The best explanation I can offer is that Bismarck has tried to induce Russia to sit still and take a bribe while France is being crushed ; and that Russia has declined. Next, he has tried to get Russia involved in the Balkan Peninsula ; and here too he has failed. And now he is thinking what he shall try next. But I believe he is still true to the main principle of his policy, employing his neighbours to pull each other's teeth out."

The Sultan seemed now to be gradually becoming reconciled to the idea of a big Bulgaria, and was even said to look upon it as the best bulwark against Russia. Some people, on the other hand, declared that the horror of being obliged to rely on such a defence was enough in itself to make Russian vassalage tolerable to him.

The year did not pass without a letter from Sir Robert Morier, who, in November, 1887, wrote to Sir William White, from St. Petersburg, the following vivacious and, in the closing passages, somewhat startling epistle :

"MY DEAR WHITE,

"I am so remiss in reading the confidential print (indeed, it requires a supernatural effort for me to wade

through these evacuations of infinite donkeys) that it was only quite recently that I stumbled across your protest about my conversation with Greppi. I was shocked to see that you had fancied I had allowed what appeared to you a *dénigrant* observation respecting yourself to pass unchallenged. But, though the matter is now so remote that I cannot remember the exact words, I must most positively assure you that there was nothing of the sort said by Greppi, and that if there had been I should have taken it up.

"We were both 'put out' at the persistent way in which we heard on all sides that it was beyond doubt that Giers had threatened an occupation of Varna or Erzeroum when we *knew* this was not true; and various suggestions were made—and amongst others, so far as I recollect (I have not time to look up my despatch, as messenger is just off), Greppi said that what with Nelidoff and the Turks and the atmosphere created at Constantinople, it almost seemed as if even men like Blanc and White could not always diagnose correctly, or some words to that effect. As he has the greatest admiration for Blanc, and knows that you are one of my oldest friends and I one of your oldest admirers it would have been quite absurd for me to take up a perfectly innocent remark.

"You and I occupy such absolutely opposite poles in this Eastern Question that it would be a waste of paper to enter into discussion of it, though perhaps we may do so some day *viva voce*; I am, however as you know, very Catholic in my views, and can admire a real work of art, though it's not in my own style, and I cannot say how highly I appreciate the splendid manner in which you have *géré* your Embassy since your arrival at Constantinople. I wish poor Odo had been alive to appreciate it with me. Nevertheless, for the *ultimate* success of your policy, you would require to have at your back a *man*, with the very newest repeating-rifle, very sharp balls and very dry powder, and not a Philistine carrying a blunderbuss loaded with cowdung."

Sir Robert Morier's picture of the typical English statesman is not a flattering one. But possibly it was of the nation at large that he was thinking; that

Mr. Findlay. Mr. Bax Ironside. Mr. Tower. Mr. Stronge. Mr. des Graz.



Mr. R. Kennedy. Colonel Trotter. Sir William White. Mr. Edmund Fane. Mr. Gerard Lowther.

THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS STAFF.

[To face p. 246.



"Johannes de Tauro" whom he mentions in a much earlier letter as anxious to find a capable drover and unable, meanwhile, to think himself the fine fellow he once used to be.

In connection with Bulgaria, the year 1887 is memorable as the one in which Prince Ferdinand of Coburg was elected to the throne. Russia, Turkey and all the Powers protested against the election. But the Prince, in spite of orders to leave and attempts at arrest and assassination, still remained and has already enjoyed a reign of fourteen years.

Early in February, 1888, Sir William White received an interesting but alarming communication (originating with one of the Turkish Ambassadors abroad) on the subject of a speech just delivered by Prince Bismarck. The speech caused no particular sensation in Europe; but, according to the Turks, it was nothing less than an invitation to destroy Turkey without disturbing the general peace; and this, it was said, could be done through an advance upon Erzeroum. They did not believe in an attack on Bulgaria, being convinced that the Russians would endure almost anything rather than widen the breach between themselves and a Slav nation.

There were no signs generally perceptible of any intention to march upon Erzeroum. But the Turkish apprehensions on the subject may be worth remembering.

Sir Henry Elliot had contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* a very interesting article on Turkish affairs (before referred to in connection with the Conference of Constantinople) in which the account given of the circumstances attending the death of the Sultan's predecessor, Abdul Aziz, could scarcely fail to displease Abdul Hamid, the actual occupant of the throne. Rustem Pasha, Turkish Ambassador in London, made a formal representation on

the subject ; and he at the same time complained of an attack upon the Sultan as Caliph published by the *Punjab Times*. He was assured that the *Punjab Times* was unknown in England, and that "the power of the government of India over the Press was scarcely more effective than that of the Home Government."

Sir Henry Elliot was certainly the last person whom his enemies of the year 1876 would have expected to turn against the Sultan.

It seemed in 1888, as it has seemed so often since the war of 1877, that Sir Henry Layard's favourite prediction as to the impossibility of replacing the Turkish Empire by a number of petty states, all jealous of one another, might once more be illustrated. There had already been a war between Serbia and Bulgaria ; and now Greece, against whose claims Serbia, Bulgaria and Roumania were all protesting, came forward to assert ancient pretensions which modern developments had rendered inadmissible.

In the old days, before nationality questions had taken form, the Christian populations of the Balkan Peninsula used to be described in a general way as "Greeks": Greek Christians, that is to say. In the time of the Greek struggle for independence the "hetæraë" were the champions of Christian emancipation in Serbia and Roumania as in Greece itself. The language of the Church, of the schools, of business, and of educated society in all the Christian provinces was Greek ; and the replacement of Turkey by a reconstructed Greek empire, with Constantinople as its capital, was looked upon as a natural and possible solution of the Eastern Question. Even Mr. Stratford Canning—afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe—held this now untenable view in 1826 ; nor had Prince Albert given it up in 1854. To Prince Albert's idealistic

project Lord Palmerston objected that it involved co-operation with Russia our enemy, against Turkey our ally.

The rise of other Balkan nationalities, Roumanian and Slavonian, has destroyed the dream of a greater Greece ; and now the only hopes the Hellenes have of advancing their boundaries is through the predominance of the Greek language in a few outside provinces or districts. On the other hand, the Roumanian and Albanian populations on the borders of the Greek kingdom have begun to cultivate their separate nationalities, the Roumanians being encouraged in this direction by educational grants from the Bucharest Government.

The constant agitation of the Greeks against their Roumanian and Slavonian competitors for the Turkish inheritance, called for no official notice on the part of the English Ambassador at Constantinople, though it could not but engage his attention. Meanwhile, Sir William White's active interference was urgently demanded by events in Armenia, where attempts were said to have been made towards the re-establishment of the ancient Armenian kingdom : feeble attempts suppressed with ferocious cruelty.

Sir William White questioned the Grand Vizier on the subject, and was assured that the Government possessed evidence of a deeply laid, widely spread conspiracy which must be routed out and put an end to. The Armenians, on their side, appealed to the English Government ; which declared its inability to take action under the Treaty of Berlin, though it professed its readiness to do so if the other Powers would co-operate.

By a special article of the Treaty of Berlin, the Sublime Porte was bound to grant to the Christians of Armenia the same religious liberty and personal security enjoyed by the Christian inhabitants of the European provinces.



The English Government now made it its own special duty to urge the Porte to do justice to the Armenians, although the Berlin Treaty does not authorise any Power without the consent of the co-signatories, to intervene in the internal affairs of Turkey. A certain chieftain, Moussa Bey, who had been the principal leader in the systematic outrages against the Christians at Van, Bitlis and Mush, was brought to trial without result; and Sir William White wrote to his Government that there was a powerful clique at Constantinople ready to go to any length in order to prevent this wretch from being fully examined.

Moussa Bey was in fact acquitted, and the trial of the various generals and officials accused of complicity in the massacres of Van, Bitlis and Mush was such a mockery of justice that Sir William White addressed to his Government an indignant complaint.

It is difficult to imagine an embassy more hardly worked than that of Constantinople, where, apart from the Eastern Question in its most oppressive form, the ambassador has to occupy himself with such minor branches of it as the condition of Bulgaria, the rival claims of Bulgaria and Servia, the aspirations of Greece and her conflicts on the one hand with Turkey, on the other with the newly created Slavonian States of the Balkan Peninsula.

There were the bond-holders, moreover, constantly appealing to the Ambassador in connection with dividends no longer paid and securities no longer worth verifying.

The ordinary office-work at the Constantinople Embassy, apart from political affairs, is a serious matter; and scarcely a day, seldom a week, never by any chance a month, passed without bringing up one of those "questions" which must often have been to Sir William White what *la question* in former days was to a first-class criminal.

## CHAPTER XX

### PASSAGE OF THE STRAITS

THE last important matter with which Sir William White had to deal was the passage of the Straits by Russian ships carrying troops.

Fifteen years before, in 1876, Prince Gortchakoff had made known through a letter published in the official *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* that all Russia desired from Turkey was full liberty for her commercial ships to pass in and out of the Black Sea ; and this, he added, could be secured with comparative ease from a power in so feeble a condition. Russia, therefore, desired nothing more than the maintenance at Constantinople of the *status quo*.

That Russia in regard to the Straits could do with Turkey much as she pleased was plainly shown in the year 1891, when several vessels of the Russian "Volunteer fleet," with arms and troops on board, sailed from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, and thence to the Pacific, and from the Pacific by way of the Mediterranean to the Black Sea.

One of these ships was stopped by the Turkish commander of the Dardanelles who pointed out that, though the vessel sailed under the commercial flag, it carried troops and munitions of war, and could not therefore be regarded as a vessel of trade. Explanations were

made and assurances given; the result of the friendly negotiations being that Russia, whenever she wished to send troops under the commercial flag from the Black Sea to the Pacific, was to give notice beforehand.

In regard to ships of the Volunteer fleet returning from the Pacific, the Turks were even less exacting; all that was required from the Russian captain being a declaration that his ship belonged to the Volunteer fleet and carried unarmed soldiers who had served their time.

The news of this arrangement between Russia and the Porte—which, from the nature of the case could not be kept secret—caused much excitement in England, Germany, Austria and Italy, the first impression produced by the passage of the troop-ships being that Russia had at last obtained the right of sending war-vessels through the Straits.

She had done better than that. To pass war-ships, avowed as such, from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean would be to incur the risk of war with the European Powers. To send troops through the Straits on ships described as “commercial” and protected by the commercial flag was to run no risk whatever.

As the Russian Volunteer fleet had been founded in 1885, during the tightly strained relations between Russia and England on the subject of the Afghan frontier, and avowedly with a view to the destruction of English commerce, it was difficult to see how any “commercial” character could now be claimed for it.

Against the privilege conceded by Turkey to Russia of sending ships with troops on board through the Straits, the English Government protested diplomatically through Sir William White, and practically by means of a naval demonstration.

The Porte had some time before issued a circular note refusing permission to foreign war-vessels to execute manœuvres within fifteen marine miles of the Turkish coast. But in spite of this prohibition the British admiral now landed a force on the small island of Cigri, sank torpedoes in the harbour, and carried out a series of naval operations, of which Sir William White was at once called upon to furnish explanations.

Whatever explanations may have been given, they had apparently some connection with the passage of the Straits by the vessels of the Russian Volunteer fleet ; for the Russians now sent out a circular pointing out that these vessels had been running for several years between Odessa and Vladivostock, and that they had been granted free passage through the Dardanelles only because they sailed under the commercial flag. Inasmuch as they sometimes carried convicts with military guards and brought back time-expired soldiers, the Turkish authorities had occasionally detained them by mistake ; and, to avoid the possibility of similar misunderstandings in the future an arrangement had now been made which defined the rights of the vessels under the old treaty, without introducing any new principle.

Nine years later, in the autumn of 1900, Russia took full advantage of her new understanding with the Porte in order to send troops through the Straits on their way to China ; a proceeding to which not one of Russia's allies could possibly take objection.

The interests of Russia in the Black Sea are so much greater than those of Turkey, and Russia is so constantly extending her Power along the coasts of this partly Turkish, principally Russian lake, that the Russians have at last got into the habit of looking upon the Black Sea as their own and of asking why they should not go in

and out of it freely ; why, in short, they are not entrusted (in the words first used by Alexander I.) with "the keys of their house" ?

The fact is, the house has two occupants who cannot live peaceably together ; and the least important of the two has alone a door-key and, much to the annoyance of the other, can pass in and out of the house in peaceful garb or in warlike attire whenever he thinks fit. The Russian occupant has also the right of ingress and egress, but always on the understanding that he does not carry arms. Dangerous weapons he must neither bring in nor take out. For buying and selling purposes, however, his liberty is just as great as that of his fellow occupant. He may, for example, send out corn to England and take in wine from France without hindrance or limit.

It seems hard that Russia should not be allowed to indulge her bellicose tastes by sending armed vessels through the Straits whenever she has a mind to do so. But this would mean sending armed vessels to and fro in front of the Turkish capital.

There are historical reasons, moreover, and reasons derived from treaties against any such course. In the reign of Peter the Great, when Russia had not even a fishing-boat on the Euxine, the founder of the Russian navy was anxious to place upon it a ship or two for "purely commercial purposes." The reply made to his request was that "the Sultan would as soon see a stranger inside his harem as a foreign vessel on the Black Sea."

One of Peter's advisers in reference to the Black Sea project was the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who seems to have possessed something of the diplomatic talent which distinguished the great political prelates of France. He counselled Peter not to press for permission to place a

vessel on the Black Sea, but to build on the Sea of Azov as many ships as possible; saying that the day would come when, without waiting for leave to enter the Euxine, he would be able to force the passage.

Aided by workmen from Deptford and Amsterdam, Peter built as many as eighty-six ships and boats of various kinds on the Sea of Azov and placed many of them under English and Dutch captains. He then resolved to send to Constantinople an able diplomatist named Ukraintseff, and to send him by sea. This, in spite of strenuous objections from the Pasha in command at Kertch, he actually did.

Ukraintseff's arrival at Constantinople caused the greatest consternation, and strange rumours were now set going as to Russia's intention to bring ships from Archangel to the Mediterranean in order to force their way through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus into the Black Sea.

No such operation, by the way, has ever yet been performed by Russia. An English officer holding a high command in the Russian navy, Admiral Elphinstone, after destroying the Turkish Fleet in the Bay of Tchesmé, forced the passage of the Dardanelles and sailed to Constantinople, hoping vainly that the rest of the Russian ships would follow him. Finding that they failed to do so, he ordered a cup of tea, and returned to the Mediterranean. Adequately supported he would beyond doubt have taken Constantinople. Another English officer in the service of his own country, Admiral Duckworth, sailed through the Dardanelles and made his way to Constantinople in 1807, when Turkey was in alliance with France. One of Admiral Duckworth's junior officers at the time was Mr. Lyons, who forty-seven years afterwards, as Admiral Lyons, sailed once

more from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea ; this time in command of the British Fleet.

Russia does not, even to this day, claim as actually belonging to her the right of sending armed vessels from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. But she has already accustomed the Turks to the outward passage of Russian convict ships with soldiers on board to guard the prisoners, and to the homeward passage of ships bearing soldiers who have finished their term of service in distant Russian possessions.

Soon after the inquiries on the subject of the passage of the Dardanelles by Russian troopships, about the middle of December, 1891, Sir William White left Constantinople for Berlin, where he proposed to spend Christmas with his wife and daughter. Although in connection with the affairs of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia he had acted with the greatest discretion, the Bulgarians knew well enough who had befriended them in their difficulty ; and when Sir William passed through Bulgaria, steps had to be taken at Sofia to prevent his being made the object of a grand political demonstration.

The sudden change from the sunny south to the wintry north proved very trying ; and it was said that Sir William had started from Constantinople without a sufficient provision of furs for the last stages of his journey. He in any case took a severe chill, and on his arrival at Berlin was advised to keep to his bed—only, as was at first hoped, for a few days. The chill, however, turned to influenza, the influenza affected the patient's heart, and at last, almost suddenly, on December 28, he passed away.

The Emperor William lost no time in telegraphing to the Ambassador's newly made widow the expression of

his sympathy and sorrow, while Sir Edward Malet, from the British Embassy, despatched messages to the Queen, Lord Salisbury, and the Sultan. A wreath sent by the Sultan to be placed on Sir William's coffin, was decked with the Ottoman colours. Another wreath was forwarded by the Staff of the Embassy which Sir William had so ably directed, and by whose members he was so much esteemed and beloved. Sir Edward Malet laid upon the coffin, by the Queen's command, a bronze wreath of oak and laurel leaves, with the inscription, "A mark of sincere respect and deep regret from Victoria R.I., and His Excellency deposited a like memento as a last token of regard from himself and Lady Ermyntrude Malet.

Sir William White was buried with military honours and with the funeral escort of a full general, in the capital of the country where for ten years he had lived as consul.

He began his career without influence or interest of any kind. When, in 1857, he entered the Warsaw Consulate, he had been occupied for fourteen years previously with agriculture and the management of his mother's and grandmother's land in a distant part of Poland. But he inspired interest and created influence as he went on—among his colleagues abroad and with his chiefs at home. The Polish Insurrection of 1863 brought him into communication with Lord Napier, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and with Lord Russell, Secretary for Foreign Affairs; and it was on Lord Napier's recommendation that Lord Russell appointed him to the British Consulate at Dantzic.

Lord Odo Russell, Ambassador at Berlin, and Sir Robert Morier, Minister at Munich, pressed his claims for the Agency at Belgrade at a moment, when, apart from his appointed duties as Consul at Dantzic, he had



been doing all kinds of special work for the Foreign Office ; and he was still Consul-General and Diplomatic Agent at Belgrade when he was attached to Lord Salisbury at Constantinople in connection with the Conference.

It needed no interest, no influence, to get him appointed a year afterwards to Bucharest ; for the appointment, accompanied by important promotion in the matter of rank, was made by Lord Salisbury himself. The Foreign Office now supported him, whichever of the two parties happened to be in power ; and not only the Foreign Office ; but the Queen herself. So, in one of his letters, Lord Salisbury assures Sir William. Sir William White's success was due to his own personal character and to fortunate circumstances, of which, in virtue of his character, he took the fullest possible advantage.

Sir Edward Malet, in a very interesting paper on diplomacy, has said that "more men have risen through the luck of being in the places at the moment when the glare of torchlight, the blaze of war lights them up, than through any special brilliancy of their own." Sir William White had three of these bits of luck ; and he had in each case, to quote once more from Sir Edward Malet, "sufficient ability to come with credit out of the ordeal." He had been only four years at Warsaw when Poland entered upon the preliminaries of a formidable insurrection. He had scarcely reached Belgrade when Servia rose against the Turks. Promoted to Bucharest, he found himself in the capital of a country which claimed the recognition of its newly gained independence, but had many difficulties and even dangers to go through before its claim was acceded to by the European Powers.

When the Prince of a tributary Roumania became king of an independent Roumania, Sir William White, like the

ruler of the country to which he was accredited, gained also two steps. As Roumania was now no longer a subject state, nor Charles I. a vassal Prince, so Sir William White was no longer a member of the Consular Service, but a diplomatist with a rank second only to that of ambassador.

By this time, thanks to the skill he had shown in dealing with difficult situations on so many different occasions, in so many different lands, he had acquired a high reputation as a diplomatist; and he was sent to Constantinople in order to arrange a very difficult matter, which if not quickly settled might have endangered the peace of Europe.

Sir William White's success in bringing about an understanding with Russia in regard to the union of Bulgaria with Eastern Roumelia was chiefly due to his securing the co-operation of Austria.

## CHAPTER XXI

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

DURING his fourteen years' adscription to the soil in Poland—what a *corvée* it must have been to the future diplomatist!—Sir William White seems to have acquired no taste for the ordinary pleasures of a country life. In many of his letters he speaks of the happy days he passed with his mother and grandmother in Poland; but neither hunting, shooting, nor fishing possessed any interest for him. As for town life, he cared little for the drama, and still less for music. He pointed out to me, however, one day, that Rubinstein could scarcely be called a Russian, inasmuch as, born in Moldavia, he belonged to a Jewish family which had migrated towards the Danube from Brody in Eastern Galicia; and he knew Wagner, not indeed as a composer, but only in his character of Revolutionist at Dresden and of courtier at Munich.

A German Ambassador of the present day, Herr von Keudell, is a pianist of the first order. Sir Henry Layard was a lover of pictures, and a collector of all kinds of artistic curiosities. Sir Robert Morier wrote brilliant pamphlets and magazine articles—see his unmistakable papers on *Prussia and the Vatican*, published anonymously in the 1874 volume of Macmillan's Magazine. But Sir William White occupied himself neither with art, nor as a performer with literature, though he was a great reader of new publications in various languages on all

kinds of political subjects. New novels he read when they had become such engrossing topics of conversation that it was difficult to get on at a dinner-party without knowing something about them. I cannot say whether he ever danced. But if so, he had, when I first knew him, given up dancing. He had reached the age of thirty-seven and with his grave air looked several years older. He was no smoker; nor did he play cards—the favourite diversion of so many diplomatists.

Talleyrand held that the man who did not play whist was preparing for himself a sad old age; and Nesselrode invented, in addition to iced plum-pudding, whist with trumps chosen not by chance but by the dealer: one of the features of the famous game in its latest development.

But Sir William White was neither a gourmet nor a whist-player. He indeed disliked gambling in its mildest forms; and his son once told me that, though his father allowed him to play at cards, it was only on condition that if he won he was to give away his winnings in charity; which most players would consider poor sport.

No one who has not transacted diplomatic business with Sir William White can know positively what his methods in diplomacy were. The diplomatist's remark about "the bear" at the British Embassy has been already cited. To a Chinese Envoy who was studiously courteous, and rather circuitous in his forms of courtesy, I once heard him say abruptly, the moment after they had been introduced, "What is your rank in China?"

"Mandarin of the second class," replied the surprised Chinaman.

Never, on the other hand, did Sir William allow himself to be disconcerted by a sudden and direct question.

"Do you know Count ——?" a friend asked him, who had reason to believe that the Count and the Ambassador were not on the best possible terms.

"I do," replied Sir William.

"And what sort of a man is he?"

"Do you know him?"

"Yes."

"Then you know what sort of a man he is."

That was how he disposed of an abrupt interrogation addressed to himself.

One day at Warsaw, he called with me at the Office of Foreign Affairs, of which Baron Osten Sacken was the so-called "Director."

"How are things going on?" he inquired.

"Badly," was the Russian's reply. "The military government can now alone deal with them."

This time he was not abrupt, he was conciliatory and ingenious.

"The nation is sick," he answered. "The case is one for a physician, not a surgeon."

As for his politics, they were those of a true diplomatist. At Constantinople he had often to support Turkey and often to oppose Russia; but not because he was either a Turcophil or a Russia-phobe. The English Ambassadors who have shown themselves most strenuous in maintaining the Turkish Empire against its assailants have not for that reason been admirers of the Turks. The fact, previously mentioned, is worth insisting upon that the statesman who first expressed the wish to see the Turks turned out of Europe "bag and baggage" was not Mr. Gladstone, but Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who in 1821 used these words:

"As a matter of humanity, I wish with all my soul that the Greeks were put in possession of their whole

patrimony, and that the Sultans were driven bag and baggage into the heart of Asia. *cf 12'*

Whether Mr. Gladstone ever saw the letter from Mr. Stratford Canning in which the above passage occurs may well be doubted. Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet was published in any case in 1876. Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole's biography of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, from which Lord Stratford's remarkable letter is quoted—not until 1888. The "bag and baggage" phrase belongs in any case to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who used it fifty years earlier than Mr. Gladstone and in the same connection.

Sir William White entertained as much dislike as Lord Palmerston himself for the trained official, the perfect functionary, though the goings on of such personages afforded him at times considerable amusement. I once told him of a strange comedy that was being played between two friends of mine, one of them a high official, the other a retired Indian colonel. The Colonel invited the civil servant to dinner, and the entertainment was of such a magnificent character that the astonished guest had his evidently wealthy host looked up in the Income Tax papers, when it appeared that he paid on his pension of £1,100 a year (old East India Company's scale) and on nothing more. That house in Piccadilly, that retinue of servants—the plate, the wine, the two dozen guests represented an income of much more than £1,100 a year; and the eminent functionary soon discovered that his military friend drew in addition to his pension several thousands a year from an Indian paper of which he was proprietor. He caused some fifty letters in succession to be addressed to the Colonel, demanding particulars as to the profits derived from the journal in question; but at last, receiving no sort of reply, and

possessing no direct evidence against his friend, abandoned the pursuit.

"That man was a thorough bureaucrat," said Sir William, when he heard the story. "The office before everything. Friendship and the amenities of private life, nowhere. In the midst of his pleasures he is always thinking of the department. But the type is rare in England; and it is interesting to meet with it. In Germany it abounds."

The position and authority of Sir William White at Constantinople, his frankness and urbanity, together with a certain superficial roughness which his enemies sometimes mistook for asperity of character, have been well described by an American friend of his, Mr. Edward Grosvenor, Professor at Robert's College in the Turkish Capital. At the time of Sir William's death Professor Grosvenor had retired to his native America, and on receipt of the sad news, he at once published in the *Independent* of New York, a most interesting article on the man he so much admired.

"The position of British Ambassador at Constantinople," wrote Professor Grosvenor, "is almost Vice-regal, the salary but little less than that of President of the United States. An immense Winter Palace in Pera, and one for summer hardly less sumptuous on the Bosphorus; gunboats and despatch boats, and steam launches, trains of carriages and horses constantly at his disposal, troops of diplomatic attachés and household servants, and crimson-coated soldiers, and gilt-bedecked cavasses maintained for his convenience and splendour by Great Britain, and a hundred accessories more, of almost kingly rank and state, are outward manifestations of his dignity and grandeur. Yet, the recipient of so much, he is expected by the value and importance of his services to merit it all the more. But since Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, still reverently called by the Ottomans 'Buyouk Eltchi' ('The Great Ambassador'), the career of not a single British

Ambassador at Constantinople, with the possible exception of the versatile Lord Dufferin, could be called a great success.

"Sir William White has revived the best traditions of successful British diplomacy. With no act of meanness staining his record, with no scandal resting upon him or his house, in a humdrum period of peace, which afforded no opportunity for spectacular display, he has vindicated British claims, advanced British interests, and increased British influence all through the East.

"In Sir William White not a feature or intonation suggested the traditional diplomat. No inexperienced stranger standing for the first time in his presence could have dreamed that in that ambassadorial school of Constantinople wherein are sharpened the keenest intellects, he was of all proficient the subtlest and profoundest. No man better loved a joke; no man could better repeat a rousing story, not only once or twice; and after each tale he told would come peals of roaring laughter that seemed to reverberate from all the recesses of his giant frame. In imagination, I hear him say again, 'Isn't that a good story? Hah?' his invariable after-question, while his form would be again convulsed with continued and resonant mirth. His face inspired confidence and respect. Frankness and honesty appeared a part of every word he uttered. He seemed to be willing to tell all he knew on every subject he discussed. A bluff urbanity and courtesy he had ready for all. Yet none could be more absolutely ignorant of what he judged it best not to know. None could more charmingly discourse on some secret and important matter and overwhelm with a sense of frankness, and yet leave it all unsaid. . . ."

"Nor must Lady White be forgotten," writes Professor Grosvenor. "A main contribution to all his success was that lovely and genial lady who for twenty-five years never faltered at his side. It is reported that he once said the greatest achievement of his life was winning the hand of Miss Kendzior at Dantzic. The graceful suavity and tact, and at times, because of physical ailments, the fortitude and even heroism with which Lady White fulfilled all the social requirements of her station, contributed in large measure to the official success of the Embassy. Moreover, foremost in every philanthropic undertaking, and ready not only to give, but to go wherever there was



destitution, sickness, or distress, Lady White made a record no less honourable, and perhaps even more permanent, than the showier successes of her husband.

"On the Bosphorus there is a little village inhabited by persons rendered destitute by fire, commonly called Lady White's Cottages, as built by her initiative, and the expenses defrayed very largely by her beneficence."

Throughout his career Sir William White was a great writer and receiver of letters, and it is interesting to note that his letters from Ministers of State, Ambassadors and other high functionaries are in their own handwriting, with the exception only of two letters from Mr. Gladstone, in which the opening line and the signature are alone in the writer's hand. In the interests of caligraphy, and for the discouragement of cacography, it may be added that the letters of these exalted personages are almost without exception clearly and legibly written.

To the Duke of Norfolk belongs an impressive scrawl which is at least peculiar to His Grace, and which, however startling, is quite readable; and if in a highly interesting letter addressed to Sir William White by Lord Russell there are signs of feebleness in the penmanship, it must be remembered that the writer had already at the time entered his eighty-first year.

In Lord Salisbury's longest letters, even when there is evidence of their having been written in haste, there are no corrections, no erasures; while their style is so plain, so direct, so lucid, that the meaning of a whole sentence can be taken in at a glance.

Lord Iddesleigh's style is less forcible, but equally transparent. One of Lord Iddesleigh's letters contains the happiest possible exposition (cited from Count Hatzfeldt) of the different policies pursued by Russia and by England towards Turkey: Russia attacking her from time to time, and taking from her a piece of land, but afterwards leaving

her in repose ; England defending her at every opportunity, but worrying her with perpetual advice, and destroying her repose.

Lord Salisbury's and Lord Iddesleigh's letters, apart from whatever words of wisdom they may contain, carry with them in every case a fine literary flavour ; and as much may be said of the one brief letter from Lord Rosebery in the collection.

Lord Granville's letters consist of only a few sentences ; Lord Derby's of only a few phrases—sometimes only a few words.

Sir Henry Layard is always serious, sometimes severe, frequently in a rage ; what particularly provokes his ire being the presumptuousness of upstart Slavonian Governments and the folly and feebleness of the Turks in dealing with them.

Sir Henry Elliot, always sensible and fair, indulges now and then in a piece of pleasantry ; but it is pleasantry of the diplomatic kind, as when he tells Sir William White—at that time agent without credentials at the capital of unrecognised Roumania—that he hopes soon to hear “that his frontiers have been rectified.”

“Sensible”—the epithet I have taken the liberty of applying to Sir Henry Elliot—is, by the way, a favourite one in the diplomatic vocabulary of praise ; and for a diplomatist to call a man “sensible” is to bestow upon him eulogy of a high order. Sir Henry Layard, writing from Constantinople to Sir William White at Belgrade, about M. Christitch, Envoy from Servia, and, above all, about M. Bratiano, Envoy from Roumania, describes them both as “sensible” men. Sir Henry Elliot in advising Sir William White from Vienna to make the acquaintance at Bucharest of M. Stourdza, does so on the ground of M. Stourdza's being a “sensible” man.

Sir William White, writing from Bucharest to Sir Henry Elliot at Vienna, concerning King Charles of Roumania, declares with enthusiasm that His Majesty is a *most* "sensible" man; and I well remember Lord Napier at St. Petersburg speaking of Vice-Consul White at Warsaw as a "sensible" man.

Lord Odo Russell and, above all, Sir Robert Morier (both "sensible" men), are in their correspondence with Sir William White always on the laugh, though their letters are often serious enough in import. But these are not, it must be remembered, Service letters. No official relations existed at any time between Sir William White and Sir Robert Morier; and though Sir William White was Consul at Dantzic when Lord Odo Russell was Ambassador at Berlin, all Sir William's reports on political questions—such as the Attitude of Hungary towards Austria, after the war of 1866, Church Affairs in South Germany, and so on, were (as appears from Lord Hammond's letters on the subject) sent direct to the Foreign Office.

In their stiff and serious moments diplomatists write plain English. But diplomatists *en robe de chambre*, like Sir Robert Morier and Lord Odo Russell in their letters to Sir William White, adopt a polyglottic style, to which Sir William, who, in addition to indispensable French and German, had various Slavonic languages alike at his finger's ends and at the tip of his tongue, replies in a similar jargon. Lord Odo Russell in his wanderings from his native tongue confines himself to French, German and Italian. But Sir Robert Morier goes back now and then into the past, and introduces a phrase of Latin or a word of Greek.

Lord Palmerston, who wrote both French and Italian with correctness and ease, confined himself to English

when he was writing English; and he reproved with severity secretaries and attachés who in their despatches made use of foreign phrases, or, worse still, foreign idioms in an English dress.

Lord Beaconsfield had such a horror of French words in English sentences that he describes as "a stroke of state" what one might almost be pardoned for calling a "*coup d'état*."

The linguistic revels of Sir Robert Morier are, all the same, delightfully fantastic, and his English is vigorous indeed when he chooses to confine himself to his native tongue.

I have not yet spoken except in the briefest manner of Sir William White's own letters, of which the most important are those addressed to Sir Robert Morier on Eastern politics. Many of Sir William White's very interesting letters to Mr. Cadman Jones begin with a few words of salutation in the Polish language, in memory, no doubt, of the time they passed together as young men at Gora Pulawska. Here is one:

"Jan. 1, 1878.

"Neither of us has sufficient leisure to keep up a regular correspondence, but the commencement of this new year has reminded me that I should so much like to hear of old, old friends; I therefore write to you with my best and affectionate wishes for yourself and family from me and mine. How sorry I was to have to leave England without being able to see any of your children! I sometimes think of that pious, good soul, their grandmother, and often of mine. What an interest they would have taken in the progress of the young generation! My two children are doing very well under God's blessing. We have a good governess from England, and they have improved very much. I trust that I shall be spared sufficiently long to start them in life as good Christians, and as devoted to our dear country as I am, though almost a stranger to it.

"A most critical moment has arrived for this our country, and the year 1878 will be for good or for evil as far as our European relations are concerned, a remarkable one in the annals of Queen Victoria. On the one hand, we cannot defend or perpetuate misrule in any Christian province.

"On the other, we must not be parties to spoliation—to another partition of Poland. After the descendants of Sobieski's countrymen have been so victimised in the eighteenth century, the same Holy Alliance is about to apply the same mode of treatment to those very Moslems whose progress in Europe Sobieski stopped so nobly, bravely, vigorously.

"Is not all this strange?

"Alas, the observations of our daily Press, whether Pro-Turkish or Pro-Russian, or snobbishly<sup>1</sup> lukewarm, like the —, are all to my mind flippant in the extreme. As if history did not exist for them, and as if Turkish rule could only be replaced by a power so unscrupulous and overbearing as that of the Czar!"

A letter addressed to the same correspondent from Bucharest on April 1, 1879, was written at a time when the negotiations on the subject of the recognition of Roumania as an independent state seemed to be drawing to a close, and when the time had at last come for promoting Mr. White from the Consular to the Diplomatic Service.

"... I thank you likewise for the information you give me about the edition of Gibbon.

"We are getting on, thank God, very well, and our two children are flourishing. I continue to have plenty of work, but I am likely to be well rewarded for it. It has been settled in high quarters that my future rank here shall be that of an Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; the same as that of my principal colleagues here, but more than I expected. It is a secret

<sup>1</sup> The word "snobbish" is evidently used in the French sense, as signifying affectation of a belief not sincerely entertained. Sham Ibsenites, sham Wagnerians are literary and musical snobs.

yet ; but I do not mind telling you confidentially as one of my oldest friends and chums, and one who has no connection with the Press. I wonder myself at my success in life. This future rank is next to that of an Ambassador. There are, it is true, four other Consuls who are now occupying similar positions ; but each of them got his promotion out of Europe—where it is almost unexampled that one who is not a scion of nobility or a Court favourite should have attained it. Excuse all these details, but I thought they might interest you and your children."

A letter from Bucharest, dated April 4, 1885, beginning with the usual "Kochany bracie moy" ["My dear brother"], is in reply to a congratulatory one in regard to the K.C.M.G. which Sir William had just received.

"My best thanks for your congratulations ; none could be more welcome. Our friendship is certainly of a very old standing, and you are for me a link connecting me with my college days and Gora, and all its early and affectionate recollections. Indeed, you are the only person in the United Kingdom representing to me a living witness of those happy days long gone by. Your charming visit here, in 1878, was made when I was just feeling my way in this new country, where I have been pretty successful, as I may say I have been in the profession to which I took so late in life. You perhaps know that both my parents and Mrs. Neville intended me for the Diplomatic or Consular Service before I went to Cambridge. But after I had been two years at Trinity it became clear that they had no adequate means to support me as an attaché or a vice-consul until I should be entitled to sufficient remuneration. This made me give it up. But my time was not lost during my long residence in Poland, as I acquired a knowledge of Russian ways and doings which has proved invaluable to me, and would prove still more so were I serving under a chief more distrustful of the Moskal<sup>1</sup> than our G. O. M. Their object on the Afghan frontier is to compel us to become their immediate neighbours in Asia, and to hold a frontier so insecure that we should be living in constant dread of a breach of the

<sup>1</sup> Polish for "Muscovite."

peace, because they imagine that by bringing this about they may the more easily get to Constantinople, and hinder our opposing them by making us permanently uncomfortable in India.

"I have just had a nice letter of congratulation from Cambridge, from a tutor at Downing. He sends me a kind message from our common friend the master of Christ's. I have not met Swainson for nineteen years, but hope to do so next time I come over to England on leave."

When Sir William White wrote this last letter he was on the point of being sent by the Gladstone Government to Constantinople in order to take charge of the Embassy *ad interim* until the arrival of Sir Edward Thornton, to whom the post had been officially assigned.

In a subsequent letter to the same correspondent, dated Therapia, September 12, 1885, Sir William White writes as follows :

"It is many months since I heard from you ; not since I got a line after I became a K.C.M.G. and placed a 'Sir' before my initials. Soon after that, five months' ago, the late Government sent me out here to take charge of H.M. Embassy—the greatest compliment that could have been paid me. My mission is one of which I have so far, I hope, acquitted myself creditably ; so, at least, I am told by competent persons. I have made friends with the Turk—not by acting on the definition some one made of an Ambassador—one lying abroad for his country's good—but by being truthful and courteous all round. My mission, however, is almost over, or drawing to a close, as the real Ambassador, Sir Edward Thornton, is actually coming out from St. Petersburg : when I go.

"I hope to be in England with my children D.V. part of the summer 1886. My boy is at school in the North ; he spent his holidays here. My wife and daughter are with me, and we have enjoyed our summer immensely.

"Excuse this egotistical letter, but I have written the above particulars in the belief that you have not noticed in the daily journals the references to your 'stary wierny' ['old and faithful one']."

All the time that Sir William White was at Constantinople in the character of Ambassador *ad interim* (from April, 1885, until November, 1886) his rank was still that of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary ; his post still Bucharest. He had been assured, moreover, on the highest authority, that there was no Embassy vacant to which he could possibly be appointed.

Sir Edward Thornton, however, continued not to arrive at Constantinople ; and when at last he reached his post it was thought best that the work on hand should still be done by his temporary substitute, who after a time permanently replaced him.

The pressing matter was then the Bulgaro-Roumelian difficulty, and in the words of one of Sir William's most intimate and most appreciative friends—Sir Hamilton Lang—it was "through the manner in which Lord Salisbury's policy was carried out by Sir William White that the union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia was accomplished without bloodshed and without a breach in the harmonious relations between the European Powers."

"Sir William White's death," writes the same correspondent,—Sir Hamilton Lang,—“was a very great loss to England and to this part of the East. His foresight would probably have prevented the Armenian Massacres. He would intuitively have seen and understood what was being plotted, and prevented the execution. Men of his calibre appear only now and then on the world's stage.”





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1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* contents were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971).



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